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# VALIANT DEEDS IN LIFE AND LITERATURE

EDITED BY

G. F. LAMB M.A.

*G. F. W. Young one of  
a ~~class~~*



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## INTRODUCTION

**I**N this book are collected the stories of brave deeds of every kind, some chosen from the novels of famous authors, others dealing with incidents that have occurred in real life. I have attempted, in selecting material, to cover as wide a field as possible. There are stories of war and of peace; accounts of brave deeds in the air, on land, on sea, on ice, and below ground; incidents of yesterday and of to-day (though the latter predominate).

"Out of this nettle danger, we pluck this flower safety," cried Hotspur. As an encouragement to banish the fear of danger the sentiment is a fine one, though unhappily it is far from being universally true. Not always is the flower successfully plucked. Sometimes, as in the tragic fate of Edgar Christian, or the death in action of Warburton-Lee, safety eludes the hero's grasp. The courage of a man who faces danger boldly is sometimes its own reward. But it is no mean one. To run into danger without need is mere folly; but to meet it, when it has to be met, without flinching, is one of the highest ideals towards which man can strive.

Danger often brings out the best in a man's character. Many a person who has never been regarded as particularly brave, who has perhaps not even regarded himself as such, has risen splendidly to the occasion when faced by a situation such as a blazing building or a capsized boat. We all like to read of daring deeds performed in such circumstances. They touch a chord to which we can instantly respond. This is an excellent thing, for it is by admiring what is fine that we learn to imitate it. It would be unwise to suggest that merely by reading about brave deeds we become brave ourselves: it is not so easy as that. But I think it is true that we may become the readier to show courage ourselves if we have learnt to appreciate it in others.

The theme of self-sacrifice is one which necessarily appears often in such a book as this. Almost every act of rescue must involve some degree of self-sacrifice. It must be at least the sacrifice of comfort. Often it is the sacrifice of personal safety. Sometimes it is the ultimate sacrifice of one's own life to save that of another. A classic instance in fiction of such self-sacrifice is that of Ham Peggotty in Dickens's *David Copperfield*, who embraces almost certain death by plunging into a raging sea in an effort to bear a life-line to a sinking ship. Self-sacrifice carried to this extreme raises the question of how far a man is justified in deliberately giving his own life to save another's. There are some who would argue that in such cases a man should not endanger his own life where the risk is heavy. Too often in the holiday season we read of brave men, perhaps with wives and children dependent on them, risking and sometimes losing their lives in order to rescue others whose folly has led them to ignore danger signs and bathe in treacherous seas. Are the rescuers justified in sacrificing themselves thus? It is a point which readers may like to debate; though, indeed, in the moment of danger many men and women do not stop to consider the moral issues but act on instinct.

We can learn from many of these extracts how important it is to be ready to act with promptness and decision when those in danger need our help. Jem Wilson does not stop to ask himself whether he ought to have a little practice before he starts balancing-tricks high above the street. The miners of the Moose River do not wait to reflect on the danger of rocks and earth collapsing upon them while they are trying to reach their imprisoned comrades. There is no hesitation on the part of the crew of the *Cossack* lest their opponents should be numerically superior (as indeed they



were) when there are men to be rescued from the German prison-ship *Altmark*. It is this spirit of instant readiness to accept danger that gives these acts of heroism a great part of their quality.

A good many of these extracts are connected with warfare. War offers obvious opportunities for the display of gallantry. Although such gallantry cannot redeem war from its cruelty, its spirit of slaughter, its senseless destructiveness, yet we cannot but admire the bravery that it calls forth, however we may hate the occasion which makes the bravery possible. Modern war no longer keeps its horrors to the field of battle: it brings them to our very homes. Any one of us may be called on to show the same courage that is expected of our armed forces. We read in the newspaper, morning after morning, of rescues from bombed buildings, carried out in spite of danger by men who in normal times were quiet, retiring clerks or shop assistants. It is deplorable that such deeds should have to be done at all, but it is inspiring to realize how much heroism is to be found among quite ordinary people.

Perhaps the noblest of all forms of courage is the steady and unwavering devotion to duty that is given, in peace and in war alike, by such men as sailors, life-boatmen, firemen, and airmen. We are sometimes inclined to take their bravery for granted. But the fact that it is a man's daily life to subdue flames, or snatch life from a stormy sea, heightens rather than lessens the nobility of it. The true test of a nation's virility may be found in its ability to produce a steady flow of such matter-of-fact and unassuming heroes, far more than in any dazzling feats of military conquest. It is our close connexion with the sea, and the constant calls on courage and devotion to duty that the sea makes necessary, that has possibly helped more than anything else to form the tougher side of our national character.

Is there anything more inspiring than the readiness of lifeboatmen all round the coast to spring to action at a moment's notice, and brave any violence of the waves in order to bring the crew and passengers of a distressed ship to safety? But it is perhaps invidious to single out one class of heroic action from among many.

A word may well be said about the literary style of these extracts. There are many kinds of good writing: it is a mistake to suppose that it is necessary to be 'literary' in order to write well. There is, certainly, a quality which, for want of a better word, we may call literary, in the prose of many distinguished writers: we find it, for instance, in the writings of Charles Lamb, R. L. Stevenson, Conrad, Walter de la Mare, and H. M. Tomlinson. But it is not necessary to possess distinctive literary talent in order to produce work that is worth reading. Anyone who has something interesting to say and who says it clearly and straightforwardly is writing well. All such writing is good in its own way. There are, for example, the personal adventures of Captain Hardy and Captain Cartwright; the exciting accounts of the Battle of Britain, the fight of the *Exeter*, and the Moose River rescue (such style may be called journalistic, but it is good journalism); the picturesque vigour of the Ramsgate coxswain's story as interpreted by Clark Russell; the piercing sincerity of Edgar Christian's unaffected jottings, often incorrect in syntax and punctuation, but among the most moving documents in English literature.

Many of such accounts are often better models for the non-literary student than are the works of the great imaginative writers. For the power of so handling words as to give intense significance to apparently trifling events is one which must always belong only to the gifted few. But every one can learn, in some degree, to tell a simple story straightforwardly. It is an art well worth acquiring.

G. F. L.



# HEROES OF THE AIR

## THE WINNING OF A D.C.M.

An incident of the Great War, written by a distinguished airman.

THE hero of this story spent almost two of the first two and a half years of the war in trench warfare with the Royal Engineers. He gained a decoration during that time, but he came to 45 Squadron without any stripes upon his sleeves. Many did not hanker after them. There is more privacy in the humbler position. It avoids the glare and limelight that inevitably discover the exalted of this world—and there was much exaltation in the matter of stripes. For instance, a private in a certain regiment gained a commission. When he came back to the same battalion his one-time lord and master, the platoon sergeant, met him.

The sergeant's congratulations were somewhat droll. "It's very nice, sir," he said, "to see ye with a star on your airm. Though I'm just thinkin' that anyone can be an officer, but it's no everybody that can become a sergeant."

But Pioneer Smith, like most people, had one foible. He gazed heavenward at every passing aeroplane. Every week he received a flying journal. He read each copy from cover to cover, religiously, fanatically. He was an aeromaniac. And, in his dreams, the scornful laughter of the aerial disinterested was swallowed up in the imagined roar of multi-cylindere engines.

At last his dream came true. He was transferred to the Royal Flying Corps as an aerial gunner. And the scoffers, to their disgust, he left behind him to continue trench warfare.

Perhaps it would be wise to explain what an aerial



gunner was. He was the man who took the rear seat in the two-seater machines. His armament consisted of either one or two Lewis guns and several drums of ammunition. As the term implied, he was a gunner pure and simple. He was not asked, or expected, to undertake the responsible task of recording reconnaissance observations, of securing photographs of enemy areas, or of observing for artillery shoots. That was the business of the officer observer or pilot. The aerial gunner merely formed the pilot's means of defence against attack from the rear. And it was a job that required a stout heart and a steady nerve.

This, then, was the job and the man who came to do it.

From the first Gunner Smith proved a good fellow. His study of the flying journal helped him to recognize the different types of machines in the air. He quickly distinguished the Hun from the friendly, if inquisitive, scout. And, above all, he learned to hold his fire until he had a good target. His nerves were not of the sort that caused a man to blast off at long range to warn the Hun that the bus carried a sting in its tail. When he did shoot, he shot straight. He shot to kill.

He went up with an old and experienced pilot for his first few jobs of work, and very soon he was considered perfectly safe to go up with a new pilot to ensure his safety.

Captain Pender had done one or two shows and was a sound, if somewhat careful, pilot. On one occasion when starting out in a flight he did a flat turn at four hundred feet, spun, recovered, and the wheels actually touched the ground as he levelled out; but he went on up again and carried out his job. Next day he was sent out on a north line patrol with Gunner Smith in the rear cockpit, his plane flying in consort with another Sopwith flown by a more experienced pilot.

A line patrol was considered a pretty cushy job of work, and, as a rule, meant monotonous hours in the air at a detailed height beating up and down the line of trenches about a mile or so on the enemy side with no particular excitement to offer. The two Sopwiths patrolled the prescribed sector for an hour, but all they saw was a British patrol crossing the lines high up above them, and an occasional British artillery bus carrying out a shoot. Then a thin film of cloud settled across the sky at 6,000 feet. They dropped below the cloud-film and carried on. They could see nothing but grey mist above; below lay the tortuous trench-line, a dull brown under the translucent cloud.

Two Albatross Scouts, deadly looking devils in their camouflage war-paint, rose rapidly from their aerodrome. They climbed quickly, pulled by their big Mercedes engines. In a few minutes they reached the film of cloud that straddled the sky. They flew inside the mist. It was just possible for the pilots to discern landmarks and keep their bearings. They flew west and, when they reached the trench line, turned south. They were completely hidden from above and below. Yet they themselves could see enough to enable them to keep their machines straight and watch for a chance to pounce on some unwary Britisher. Suddenly they saw their prey half a mile in front and about three hundred feet below. They opened out their powerful engines and rapidly overhauled the slow two-seaters. Simultaneously their murderous snouts dipped. They rushed out from the cloudbank, straight for the Sopwiths.

Their twin guns spat forth a double stream of tracer, incendiary, and armour-piercing bullets. The almost continuous streaks of fire and smoke hissed around and into the two circle-marked machines. A savage exultation rose in their hearts. These cursed



Britishers below must feel the merciless terror of their huge, black crosses, of their ugly, red-painted snouts.

Almost before the thought was born they heard the menacing crackle of bullets spitting round their own cars. They could not change their course out of the dive quickly enough. Curse that damned pig of a Britisher to the left, he's swerved, and I've missed him, thought one. I've got him, thought the other, as the Britisher to the right went suddenly down and swirled into a spinning nose-dive. At the same instant they both felt their hearts run cold as a stream of bullets pierced their machines. One was killed almost instantaneously and his machine fell like a falling leaf; then he plunged into a headlong dive, faster, faster . . . a wing buckled back, a flame licked out, and the machine whirled down a sickening mass of crumpled wreckage. The other was wounded and had his controls shot away. He fainted, then recovered consciousness to find himself following the Britisher in a flicking spin. Madly he tugged at the controls. It was hopeless. He fainted again, and mercifully knew nothing of the horrible crash that followed, that dug a hole in the ground, a hole filled and overflowing with debris four fields away from his companion's machine.

The first unmistakable crackle of the four Spandau guns was the only warning the two-seaters had of the Huns' approach. Of course, their tactics were wrong in flying so near the cloud-belt, but that does not concern us. The leader immediately swerved and split-aired to avoid the deadly stream of bullets, but not quickly enough to prevent a torn gash in the wings and tail. The sharp staccato of the rear gun replied and the crackling of the enemy bullets ceased. The pilot looked round for the other Sopwith, but could not see it. Then

his observer's voice came down the speaking-tube: "We got the Hun. He's crashed!"

"Good!" the leader replied. "Seen anything of Pender?"

"No, I had not time."

"We'll go down and look."

"Right-o!"

They went down, and flew up and down that part of the line. They saw the wreckage of two enemy machines near the canal to the left of Deulemont, but there was no sign of Pender.

"Smith must have got his Hun. I thought there were only two," shouted the observer down the mouthpiece.

"There may have been a third," called back the leader. "We'd better get home. Time's up, anyhow."

"I hope Pender and Smith are all right."

Pender did not swerve so quickly as the leader. He had not enough experience to make him act automatically. And, in the moment of thought before action, a bullet passed through the main petrol tank between the cockpits and wounded him seriously in the back. He fainted before he had time to stop his engine; and, a second later, the bus was whirling madly round, spinning with the engine on.

Smith was quicker. He had his gun on the Hun like a flash. His aim was deadly. The range was too close to miss. And, although he was jerked from his feet when the bus dived and spun, he saw the Hun spinning down above them. Then he turned his attention to his own machine.

He knew instinctively what was wrong. And he knew how to right it. He had lain along the fuselage on the way home from previous jobs and handled the joystick. He knew all the gadgets. One of the pilots had explained them to him on the aerodrome.



His one thought was to get hold of the controls. He crawled along the four feet of thin plywood between the cockpits and tried. But Pender was a big man and his head and shoulders were in the way. He was unconscious and Smith could get no answer from him.

Smith knew the bus was none too strong to stand the strain of that mad, earthward whirl. He must act at once.

He climbed out of his cockpit four feet behind the pilot's, clinging to the strut in front. His mouth was blown open by the hurricane of wind. He could hardly breathe. The lower wing and fuselage were messed with the slither of oil that rotary engines continually threw out from the exhaust. He felt himself being thrown from his slippery hold of the spinning machine. Then, somehow, he got both feet out of the plane. He lunged forward with one hand for the strut in front, missed, and almost fell overboard. A cold sweat broke out all over his body. He tried again and succeeded. He hauled himself forward against the demon wind-rush and braced both legs against it. Hanging on like death, with one arm curled around the centre-section strut, he leant inside the pilot's cockpit. He turned a tap. . . . Nothing happened. He tried another, and the engine's roaring ceased. The wind-blast lessened, and he leant still farther inside the cockpit. The stick was wedged between the pilot's legs. He pulled Pender back and pushed the joystick forward; and was almost thrown again as the bus came out of the spinning nosedive.

He shook Pender and shouted to him.

Field gunners, with glasses to their eyes, watched the plane hurtle earthwards spinning, recover, and glide. They saw the figure of the observer out upon the wing; heard him shouting to the pilot:

"Wake up, Pender! For God's sake! Wake up."

Pender stirred and opened his eyes drunkenly. He did not speak. He looked stupidly at Smith. And, with his right foot on the rudder bar, he was veering the bus round to Hunland.

"Turn left, sir. Turn left," Smith bawled.

Mechanically the pilot obeyed. They were going straight, due west, but losing height too rapidly. Smith turned back the tail wheel, and they flattened to a steady glide. . . . The wind pressure became less and Smith could manage fairly comfortably. He did not require to hang on by tooth and nail.

They glided towards a field of hops, straight for the midst of the poles. Smith called out to the pilot:

"Pull her up, sir. . . . Steady, sir, now back. . . . Pull her up, sir. . . . Land her."

Pender's hand followed the words, but Smith's inexperienced judgment was slightly out. They cleared the hop poles, and pancaked on the farther side. The machine crashed, but with very little damage.

Smith, standing out on the wing, was catapulted through the wires. He lay where he fell, unconscious. He opened his eyes to find a group of gunners round him. Some one was bending over him forcing brandy down his throat.

"How d'you feel now?" asked the doctor.

"I'm all right," gasped Smith.

"Damned plucky youngster," said a gunner officer of the 16th Divisional Ammunition Column to a brother officer. "I wouldn't have given two coppers for his chance five minutes back."

Captain Pender went to hospital and later recovered, while Gunner Smith returned to the Squadron and a D.C.M.

CAPTAIN NORMAN MACMILLAN, *Into the Blue*



## AERIAL COMBAT

Although the following account is fictitious it was written by a Flying Officer who won distinction in the Great War, and was awarded the Military Cross for his courage and determination as a leader of offensive patrols. The book from which the extract is taken embodies many of his own experiences in the air, and was written to arouse interest in the future of the Air.

The incident which follows opens with the narrator, an officer in the Flying Corps, flying over German lines in the Great War.

A MILE out of the town on the Cambrai road I overtook a formed body of troops, at which I let fly a few rounds from my machine-gun just to make sure that I should not escape their notice. Whether they responded or not I did not wait to see, but on looking back over my shoulder I found that most of them had taken cover in the wayside ditch! Good evidence of bad morale!

Thinking that the Nieuports should now be somewhere in the offing, I began to search the heavens above and in front of me. Several miles to the westward, and at the height of about 6,000 feet, black puffs of Archie shells were plastering themselves in lavish profusion on the steel-blue of the empyrean: a certain indication that there were British fighting squadrons in the upper air. I watched the smoky smudges as they appeared in little groups in quick succession. . . . Then, suddenly, they ceased; and my eye was caught and held by something else.

From out the smoke-drifts, swiftly sailing eastwards, came, each in wedge formation, two groups of aeroplanes . . . five to either group. The Nieuports!

Knowing full well the reason why the German anti-aircraft gunners had withheld their fire, I scoured the

skies to find the enemy machines. Yes! There they were . . . a swarm of them, some twenty altogether, as far as I could count, flying fast towards the British scouts. Another few seconds, and the opposing Flights had met. They were now directly overhead. Instinctively I put my B.E. on a climbing turn and kept her there, straining my eyes to follow the fortunes of the fight. Round and round they whirled, the Nieuports and the Fokkers, in and out and round about each other. . . . In the *mêlée* it was impossible for me to distinguish friend from foe.

Then came a reminder that I was still over Hunland. A sharp crack sounded in my ear above the roar of the engine. I looked to the left whence the sound had come. One of my landing wires had been cut through: the two loose ends were flapping in the wind. I also noticed that there were three or four little holes in the fabric of the lower wing. Evidently I was being peppered by some sportsman on the ground. . . . Without bothering to stop and locate my aggressor, I moved on out of range. Above me the fight was drifting southwards, and, as I looked again, I saw three separate machines detach themselves from the arena and dive away towards the east . . . three Huns, probably, who had had as much of it as they could stomach. . . . The *mêlée* resolved itself into smaller groups of twos and threes and fours. The formations had obviously got split up in the fight, and it was each one for himself.

But what was this? Circling, twisting, turning, quickly losing height, two machines came tumbling down towards me. Nearer they came, and nearer . . . the reflected sunlight flashing kaleidoscopic colours from their varnished wings . . . until I could see their markings clearly . . . one British and one Hun. I could recognize them now. A Nieuport and a Rumpler, engaged in single combat. The German two-seater



seemed to be no match for the Englishman, who was continually diving and zooming up again beneath his tail, trying to get in that decisive burst of fire which would bring his opponent crashing to the ground. It seemed to be only a matter of time: the German must be overcome. I could see the tracer bullets flying through and past the Rumpler's fuselage. Surely he had got him this time! But, no! Twice, thrice, the Nieuport zoomed and fired and turned away. The Rumpler kept on its course, still under full control. Again the Nieuport flew to the attack . . . again it turned away . . . but this time the pilot made a false manoeuvre. The German had swung right-handed to avoid the stream of bullets which came tearing past him from behind; and the scout, instead of bearing straight on, or slightly to the left, by taking which course he would have placed himself in such a position that neither the enemy pilot nor observer could, owing to their machine being on a steep bank, have brought their guns to bear upon him, also turned right-handed. As it was, both machines were banked over to the right . . . the Nieuport lying on the Rumpler's starboard beam. The German gunner was quick to seize his opportunity, and got in a burst of fire before the British pilot, realizing his mistake, turned in underneath him. But those few seconds had been enough to turn the tables in favour of the Hun. The observer's aim had been good and true. A cloud of smoke belched out over the tail of the smaller machine, and the very next instant it came sliding down towards me, heeled over in a violent side-slip, closely followed by the Rumpler.

Down, down fell the Nieuport, passing no less than 100 yards ahead of me. More sedately dived the Rumpler after it. . . . Probably neither of them had noticed my presence, intent as they must have been with each other and their own affairs: the scout pilot

thoroughly preoccupied with getting his damaged machine safely to earth; the other heedful only of his victim.

As the Nieuport passed away below me I saw him flatten out to land. The open undulating country over which we were flying would afford him every chance. . . . But I had no time to watch him. . . . The Rumpler was gliding swiftly across my path. I could see the pilot and observer both leaning over the side of the fuselage, gazing downwards in their eagerness to witness the ultimate fate of their prey. Now was my chance to avenge my fellow aviator! I found myself curiously calm and collected: no spasm of excitement sent my blood throbbing through my veins as I turned in behind the Allemander's tail. The first burst from my gun must be the last one. There was not sufficient space to manœuvre for a second opening should the first burst fail. A bare 200 feet separated us from the ground.

Getting the Rumpler's cockpit well in the middle of my sights, I pressed the handle of the Bowden lever which fired the Lewis gun that I had fitted on the top of the centre-section of my B.E. Grimly I kept my hand tight clasped upon that lever: nor did I relax my grip until the last round in the drum had left the muzzle of the gun. I held on my course until my propeller-boss was no more than ten yards from the German's tail-plane. . . . Then I pulled up and round upon a climbing turn, just in time to see the Rumpler hit the ground head-on, and collapse into a tangled mass of wreckage. . . .

Vengeance is sweet: yet I could not help feeling a twinge of sympathy with those two Huns who had met their death in the triumphant hour of victory. . . . But my thoughts were immediately diverted to other channels. Not far from the now smouldering heap which formed the funeral pyre of the dead Germans



stood the little Nieuport. Beside it stood . . . or, rather, pranced . . . the pilot, waving his arms at me in wild gesticulations of delight. He had evidently managed to put his machine down without hurting himself, and he now appeared to have forgotten his own plight . . . the inevitable German prison camp . . . in his appreciation of my success in shooting down his late antagonist. Poor devil! What would he not have given to be sitting in my back-seat instead of standing on the ground helplessly awaiting capture! I searched the ground below. It was an open country, and as yet there was nobody in sight. . . . Yes! two men walking down a by-road, half a mile away. . . . Civilians, by the look of them.

Why shouldn't I land and pick up the Nieuport pilot? Quick as a flash the idea flashed through my mind. A sudden impulse urged me on. . . . I *must* land and pick him up. It would only take a minute. . . .

I throttled back, and dropped to twenty feet. If the Nieuport could effect a landing, surely I could do likewise in a slower machine which required a shorter run. The downland seemed to present a fairly even surface, and there was only a slight slope. I could come in along the furrow. . . . Ruefully I looked at my broken landing wire. . . . But it was worth the risk. The next moment my wheels had touched the ground, and the B.E. came to a standstill beside the Nieuport.

The pilot did not need to wait for explanations or instructions. In a trice he had jumped on the step and swung himself into the passenger's seat. I opened up the throttle, and we were off again, heading due west, and I, for my part, praying for a peaceful journey home.

There is a long straight road which leads from Cambrai to Bapaume and Albert. Keeping this road, a main artery of communication along which hostile bodies of troops would almost certainly be constantly

on the move, well to the northward, I steered a course parallel to it.

With the exception of a few stray shots aimed at us from the ground as we passed over the various billets in German reserve areas, we were left to pursue our way unchallenged until we neared Bapaume. I was, in fact, beginning to congratulate myself on having "got away with it," when my observer grabbed my arm. I looked round. About 4,000 feet above and behind us two small aeroplanes were sailing along in the same direction as ourselves, quickly overhauling us. It was not difficult to guess their nationality: the Fokker's lines are not easily to be mistaken. I clenched my fist and raised my arm above my head.<sup>1</sup> . . . My companion nodded his agreement. I had no wish to get embroiled in a scrap just now, but it was more than I could expect that the Fokkers should long remain unaware of the presence of the poor old B.E. trundling along so invitingly beneath them. In fine, we presented just the very target that they most preferred . . . a slow two-seater, alone and unescorted, well over on their own side of the lines! No! There was little chance of our crossing No-Man's-Land without having to make a fight for it, and I drew a degree of comfort from the fact that I had a gunner with me to guard the tail of the machine.

I was not far wrong in my opinion of the situation! No sooner had my companion slewed his gun into position than the Fokkers dropped like a couple of hawks from the blue above, one of them shooting straight at us as he diagonally flew across our path . . . his gun going full blast. Fortunately he had miscalculated the deflection which he should have allowed for our forward speed, and his bullets passed behind us. In the meantime, his fellow pilot had adopted other

<sup>1</sup> The signal to indicate the presence of enemy aircraft



tactics. He had dived to get behind and below us. He zoomed up and sent a long burst of fire which came ripping, rending through the left-hand planes.

Things looked ugly for us: ten miles to go, and about fifteen minutes' worth of fuel remaining in the tanks, with two enemy scouts to compete with who had all the advantages of superior speed and manœuvrability on their side. . . . Moreover my own initiative was hopelessly curtailed by shortage of petrol. If I were to regain our own lines, then I must hold more or less directly on my way, a course of action which must necessarily preclude my using my own gun. All that I could do was to handle my own machine in such a way as to give my observer the best possible angle of fire, and leave it to him to beat off the attack. . . .

I was now thoroughly occupied in trying to keep both my adversaries in sight. No. 1, a brilliant scarlet-painted fellow, had dipped below me, zoomed, and was turning back to dive again. The other, green and black, I could not for the moment see. He also had probably turned back to resume his attack from underneath, and I saw my gunner gazing downwards, his gun pointing over the left-hand side of the fuselage, waiting to get a shot at him.

Fokkers are well known to be difficult to pull out of a steep dive, and I thought to counter this favourite method of attack by dropping nearer to the ground; thus allowing the Allemander as little space as possible in which to recover after diving on me. I hoped that might cramp his style a bit!

The red belly and the underwings went racing, roaring overhead, and I could calculate on a few seconds' respite from No. 1.

But No. 2 was at it again. . . . For the second time I could see and feel the bullets whipping past me, some of them striking into different parts of my machine.

Then, suddenly, a cloud of oily spray broke back in my face, covering my goggles, so that everything was blurred. Hastily I pulled them off . . . just in time to see my Red friend's nose dip for his third dive. Once more I managed to avoid him by doing a flat turn. . . .

Where was Black-and-Green? One of his bullets had severed my oil-pipe. That was serious: the engine could not run long unlubricated. . . . At any minute now it might seize up.

Ah! there he was, coming up astern of me. I was about to turn a few points so as to allow my observer to bring his gun to bear upon the advancing enemy when a sharp stab of pain went through my thigh, and another through the upper part of my left arm. The Hun had got me: I had been too slow!

I don't know whether it was the pain or indignation at being outwitted by the Allemander which made me angry, but, anyway, I remember being seized with a sudden fit of rage. I ceased to care whether I got home or not . . . my only impulse was to kill that blasted Hun! He was still behind me, fast coming up and still pumping salvos into me. I jerked the stick back. Up went the nose of the B.E. She lost her flying speed; and, as Green-and-Black went rushing underneath and past her, she stalled and dropped her nose. . . . I was on the tail of the Hun now! At last my turn had come! I drove the stick forward: the old B.E. creaked and groaned under the unwonted strain as she shot nose-first into a dive. For the second time that morning I had a hostile aeroplane in the centre of my sights; for the second time I pressed the handle of the Bowden lever, and again my bullets raked the Hun from stern to stem. Down went the Fokker, steeper, ever steeper . . . until, with its nose pointing vertically towards the ground, it crashed on to the roof of some farm buildings and broke into a sheet of flame. . . .



Crack . . . crack. . . . The wind-screen, a few inches in front of my face shivered, and the clear glass sprayed into a myriad tiny lines. The aneroid crumpled up: it seemed to leer at me horribly from a hole in the middle of its mutilated dial. . . .

I was feeling sick and dizzy, yet, somehow, I remember getting the impression of a pair of scarlet wings sweeping overhead . . . and I vaguely wondered why. . . . A long time seemed to pass, and then I realized that the Nieuport pilot was shouting in my ear:

"All right. He's sheered off. Stick it, man! We're nearly home. Yank her to the right a bit."

I suppose I must have "yanked her." All that I knew was that there was a terrible smell of burning oil . . . nauseating. . . . The beat of the engine sounded queerly in my ears. "She's missing badly, Sergeant Bell," I kept repeating parrot-like. Instinctively I leaned forward to fiddle with the controls: then the pain caught me in its grip again.

We were still in the air! How funny! I heard a far-off voice.

"Good man! Hold her up. Just a minute more."

Rat-tat-tat. . . . Those cursed machine-guns again. . . . What the devil were they at? Bump . . . bump. . . . The whole machine was swaying giddily.

Again the voice: "We've crossed the Ancre. We're over No-Man's-Land. . . ." I became aware that the noise of the engine had ceased. The voice called faintly: "She's conked out! Put the nose down. Land her anywhere!" I must have obeyed, subconsciously. . . . A vision of the brown, beaten, ploughed-up earth came rushing up to meet me. . . .

"Pull her up . . . up . . . up!" A hand closed fast on mine. . . . A spasm of pain. . . . A violent jolt . . . and I knew no more.

ROTHESAY STUART WORTLEY, *Letters from a Flying Officer*

## SHOT DOWN INTO THE SEA

In the following extract a Flying Officer gives his own terse account of an adventure which happened in 1918. The officer was Captain Mossop, and the crew of his flying-boat consisted of Lieutenant Hodgson, and Privates Cooper, Dingley, and Greenwood. In company with two D.H.9's, the flying-boat had left the Great Yarmouth air station on a routine patrol.

WE took off about 6.0 P.M., and after circling near the station to let the D.H.9's take position on us we received the signal to proceed, but unfortunately, as it turned out, only one D.H. was with us. We proceeded to Smith's Knoll, which was to be the fulcrum of our patrol.

We had gone east for a while and then due south, and were turning west when we saw two machines on our starboard bow. At first I thought they were the two D.H.'s coming to join us, but on our port bow, below us, were three others which we recognized as German monoplane seaplanes. These we knew to be much superior to us in speed and manœuvring ability, and that our only hope was to get down close to the water.

I opened full out and put the nose down, the air-speed indicator crept up to 90 knots and the wires were whistling. The two enemy machines on our starboard bow came straight at us and opened fire, the first burst getting home, for Dingley, who was at the double bow-guns, crumpled up and fell into the bottom of the boat. The three on the port bow went round and on to our tail, where they were joined by the first two. From my seat I could not see them behind me, but they opened fire again and the bullets whistled near us, accompanied by a disconcerting "crack-crack" as they hit the machine. The seat between Hodgson and me was



ripped by one shot, and it is a wonder none of us were hit. I knew that to turn was fatal, so carried on and trusted to luck which, however, was not for long, as both engines slowed down and stopped, and we were forced to land. The gravity tank in the centre-section of the top wing had been badly holed and the petrol pumps could not keep up with the leakage. Luckily, the sea was smooth and we landed safely; had we bounced we would probably have crashed. As soon as possible we examined poor Dingley, but he was dead, shot through the neck.

I wrote out a pigeon message and sent off one pigeon, and was writing a confirmatory one to send with the second bird when the enemy came at us again, appearing to be flying in line ahead. They opened fire, and, as the shots were hitting the machine, I ordered the crew on to the wing tips, as I knew the body of the boat would be their target, but before we could scramble out, the petrol tanks were hit and set on fire. The engineer, Cooper, went through the body of the boat and must have been hit, for we never saw him again. We heard no shout or scream, so I concluded he must have been mortally wounded. The heat of the burning petrol and the exploding machine-gun ammunition prevented us from getting back into the hull. The gunlayer—Greenwood—got burnt about the hands and face and damaged his lifebelt, and must have jumped into the sea, for he appeared round the bow of the boat and sank. Hodgson and I let go of the wing and swam to him and held him when he came up. After a struggle in which he ducked us both in turn—he could not swim—we managed to quieten him and let him know that we would do our best for him. A man who has just escaped fire and is now in danger of drowning is likely to be a little excitable, but he was very brave and this helped us.

The machine was soon a blazing inferno, and we saw the observer of the last enemy machine that flew over us stand up and take a photograph of her, and it was not long before all signs of her had disappeared, but it left a threatening legacy—a large patch of floating petrol which was burning. Thanks to its being calm, we were able to swim away from it.

There is nearly always a humorous side, even to some tragic events, and the following will illustrate what I mean—Hodgson, the gunlayer, and I were in the water, all rigged up with helmets, goggles, etc., like three “airmen” with no machine to fly. Hodgson’s gear was *drawn from stores*, and was *quickly* discarded and floated away. *Mine remained on my head—they belonged to me!*

Hodgson and I took it in turns to support our less fortunate gunlayer, while the other took off his boots, which made it easier to tread water. I happened to have my brandy flask in my pocket, and there—all alone in the North Sea—at least, that is what it seemed like to us—we each had a drink of its stimulating contents—a case of putting spirits down to keep spirits up!

At first we could not see anything on the horizon, which to us, with only our heads above water, was very small. Presently we saw smoke, then the tops of a mast, the top of a funnel, belching large volumes of smoke. We felt happier, for we knew that some ship was racing to our rescue. It seemed an eternity before the *Halcyon* came fully into view, and even longer before she was alongside and had launched a boat. A number of her crew were lining her deck and gave us a cheer, and our gallant gunlayer, Greenwood, cheered in answer, but we told him in a few polite and nicely chosen words to reserve his breath until we were safely on board.

The ship’s doctor took charge of us, and we were supplied with dry clothing and made comfortable

through his kindness and that of the Captain and his officers, to whom we really owe our lives, as we could not have remained afloat much longer. We arrived back at Yarmouth before midnight, unhappily a smaller crew than we had set forth, for both Cooper and Dingley had found a watery grave.

[Both officers were subsequently commended for the coolness they displayed in the combat, and their gallantry in saving the life of Private Greenwood].

C. F. SNOWDEN GAMBLE  
*The Story of a North Sea Air Station*



## LUFTWAFFE OVER BRITAIN

In June, 1940, France capitulated to Germany. For a month or so the Germans were busy preparing their air bases on the French coast. Then, early in August, they launched a series of mass air attacks on Britain, and for weeks the clear sky of those perfect summer days was the scene of the clash of powerful air squadrons. Though numerically smaller than its antagonist, the British Air Force thrust off the fierce attack again and again, and the German hope of gaining complete mastery in the air gradually diminished.

On August 20 Mr Churchill voiced the gratitude of the whole nation to the young airmen who had kept the mighty German Air Force at bay. "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few," he proclaimed, and his words have now become historic.

In September another wave of attacks began, and again it was driven back. The following extract tells the story of one of the great days on which the repulse was delivered.

OVER the south-east of England the day of Sunday, 15th September, dawned a little misty, but cleared by eight o'clock and disclosed light cumulus cloud at 2,000 or 3,000 feet. The extent of this cloud varied, and in places it was heavy enough to produce light local showers. Visibility, however, was on the whole good throughout the day; the slight wind was from the west, shifting to north-west as the day advanced.

The first enemy patrols arrived soon after 9 A.M. They were reported to be in the Straits, in the Thames Estuary, off Harwich, and between Lympne and Dungeness. About 11.30 Göring launched the first wave of the morning attack, consisting of a hundred or more aircraft, soon followed by one hundred and fifty more. These crossed the English coast at three main points, near Ramsgate, between Dover and Folkestone, and a mile or two north of Dungeness. Their objective

was London. This formidable force was composed of Dornier bomber 17's and 215's escorted by Me. 109's. They flew at various heights between 15,000 and 26,000 feet. From the ground the German aircraft looked like black dots at the head of long streamers of white vapour; from the air like specks rapidly growing. They appeared at first as model aeroplanes and then, as the range closed, as full-sized aircraft.

Battle was soon joined and raged for about three-quarters of an hour over East Kent and London. Some hundred German bombers burst through our defence and reached the eastern and southern quarters of the capital. A number of them were intercepted above the centre of the city itself just as Big Ben was striking the hour of noon.

To understand the nature of the combat, it must be remembered that the aircraft engaged in it were flying at a speed of between 300 and 400 miles an hour. At that speed place-names become almost meaningless. The enemy, for example, might have been intercepted over Maidstone, but not destroyed until within a few miles of Calais. "Place attack was delivered—Hammer-smith to Dungeness" or "London to the French coast." Such phrases in the Intelligence Patrol Reports forcibly illustrate the size of the area over which the battle was fought. That being so, it is better perhaps not to attempt to plot the place of attack too accurately—an almost hopeless task—but to refer to it simply as the Southern Marches of England.

The battle in fact took place roughly in a cube about 80 miles long, 38 broad, and from 5 to 6 miles high. It was in this space between noon and half-past that between 150 and 200 individual combats took place. Many of these developed into stern chases which were broken off within a mile or two of the French coast.

Sixteen Squadrons of No. 11 Group, followed by five



from Nos. 10 and 12, were sent up to engage the enemy. All but one of the Squadrons taking part in the battle were very soon face to face with him. Five Squadrons of Spitfires opened their attack against the oncoming Germans in the Maidstone-Canterbury-Dover-Dungeness area. These were in action slightly before the Hurricane Squadrons, which intercepted farther back, between Maidstone, Tunbridge Wells, and South London.

The Germans were found to be flying in various types of formations. The bombers were usually some thousands of feet below the fighters, but sometimes this position was reversed. The bombers flew either in Vics (a 'V'-shaped formation) of from five to seven aircraft or in lines of five aircraft abreast or in a diamond formation.

The Me. 109's were usually in Vics. One pilot has described the attacking German aircraft as flying in little groups of nine arranged in threes, like a sergeant's stripes. Each group of nine was in this case supported by a group of nine Me. 110 fighters with single-seater Me. 109's or He. 113's circling high above.

The enemy soon realized that our defence was awake and active, for the German pilots could be heard calling out to each other over their wireless 'phones, "Achtung, Schpitfeuer!" They had need to keep alert. Our pilots opened fire at an average range of from 250 to 200 yards, closing when necessary to 50. Many of the enemy fighters belonged to the famous Yellow-Nose Squadrons, though some had white noses and even occasionally red.

Once the battle was joined, regular formation was frequently lost and each pilot chose an individual foe. The following account of one combat can be taken as typical of the rest.

A pilot, whose Squadron was attacking in echelon

starboard, dived out of the sun on to an Me. 109 which blew up after receiving his first burst of fire. By this time he found that another Me. 109 was on his tail. He turned, got it in his sights and set it on fire with several bursts. He was now separated from his comrades and therefore returned to his base. As he was coming down he received a message saying that the enemy were above. He looked up, saw a group of Dorniers at 14,000 feet, climbed, and attacked them. He got in a burst at a Dornier; other friendly fighters came up to help. The enemy aircraft crashed into a wood and exploded.

While the Spitfires and Hurricanes were in action over Kent, other Hurricanes were dealing with such of the enemy as had succeeded by sheer force of numbers in breaking through and reaching the outskirts of London. Fourteen Squadrons of Hurricanes, almost immediately reinforced by three more Squadrons of Spitfires, took up this task, all of them coming into action between noon and twenty past. There ensued a continuous and general engagement extending from London to the coast and beyond.

In it the tactics so carefully thought out, so assiduously practised, secured victory. Let a Squadron Leader describe the results they achieved.

"The 15th of September," he says, "dawned bright and clear at Croydon. It never seemed to do anything else during those exciting weeks of August and September. But to us it was just another day. We weren't interested in Hitler's entry into London; most of us were wondering whether we should have time to finish breakfast before the first blitz started. We were lucky.

"It wasn't till 9.30 that the sirens started wailing and the order came through to rendezvous base at 20,000 feet. As we were climbing in a southerly direc-



tion at 15,000 feet we saw thirty Heinkels supported by fifty Me. 109's 4,000 feet above them, and twenty No. 110's to a flank, approaching us from above. We turned and climbed, flying in the same direction as the bombers with the whole Squadron stringed out in echelon to port up sun, so that each man had a view of the enemy.

"A' flight timed their attack to perfection, coming down sun in a power dive on the enemy's left flank. As each was selecting his own man, the Me. 110 escort roared in to intercept with cannons blazing at 1,000 yards range, but they were two seconds too late—too late to engage our fighters, but just in time to make them hesitate long enough to miss the bomber leader. Two Heinkels heeled out of the formation.

"Meanwhile the Me. 110's had flashed out of sight, leaving the way clear for 'B' flight, as long as the Me. 109's stayed above. 'B' flight leader knew how to bide his time, but just as he was about to launch his attack the Heinkels did the unbelievable thing. They turned south; into the sun; and into him. With his first burst the leader destroyed the leading bomber, which blew up with such force that it knocked a wing off the left-hand bomber. A little bank and a burst from his guns sent the right-hand Heinkel out of the formation with smoke pouring out of both engines. Before returning home he knocked down an Me. 109. Four aircraft destroyed for an expenditure of 1,200 rounds was the best justification for our new tactics."

It must be borne in mind that this great battle was made up of Squadron attacks followed by numbers of personal combats, all taking place more or less at the same time over this wide area. Squadrons flying in pairs or wings of three units went into action in formation against an enemy similarly disposed. After the first attack delivered as often as possible out of the



sun, they broke up and individual duels took place all over the sky.

Certain of the more striking incidents may be briefly recorded.

There were the dive attacks carried out by one Squadron of Spitfires which twice passed through an enemy bomber formation, each time delivering beam attacks as they did so. These tactics threw the enemy into extreme confusion. The bombers turned almost blindly, it seemed, aircraft dropping in flames or in uncontrolled dives with every few miles of the return journey. One such aircraft, of which the cowling and cabin top blew off, shed its crew, who baled out, all except the rear gunner, who was seen to be hanging from the lower escape hatch until the aircraft dived into a wood, ten miles east of Canterbury.

Then there was the pilot who twice attacked an Me. 109 which each time strove to escape in an almost vertical dive. The first of these from 20,000 feet was successful, for the German pilot straightened out, but only to find that the British pilot had followed him down and was close upon him. "By that time," said the British pilot, "I was going faster than the enemy aircraft and I continued firing until I had to pull away to the right to avoid a collision." His burst of fire had taken effect, for the German never recovered, but plunged down until he entered cloud, about 6,000 feet below, when the British pilot had to recover from the dive as his aircraft was going at approximately four hundred and eighty miles an hour. "I then made my way through the cloud at a reasonable speed," he reported, "and saw the wreckage of the enemy aircraft burning furiously. . . . I climbed up through the cloud and narrowly missed colliding with a Ju. 88, which was on fire and being attacked by numerous Hurricanes."

There was also the Dornier which crashed just outside Victoria Station. Members of its crew landed by parachute on the Kennington Oval, while the Hurricane pilot who had shot it down and whose aircraft had gone into an uncontrollable spin when the enemy blew up beneath him, landed safely in Chelsea. Nevertheless, the yellow-nosed squadrons, the élite of the German Air Force, acquitted themselves bravely and showed greater skill than their less well-trained comrades. It was observed that they usually attacked in pairs disposed in line astern some seventy-five yards apart.

Occasionally, fire at long range proved effective. Close range combat was the rule, but it is recorded that a Hurricane pilot fired at an enemy aircraft moving faster than his own and about to get out of range, and hit it at 800 yards. This caused it to slow up, and his second burst was fired from 500 yards. Eventually he finished it off at 25 yards. Another Hurricane pilot, who had broken off a fight because the cooling system of the engine of his aircraft was giving trouble, and who was therefore returning to base, encountered a lone Me. 109 which he stalked out of the sun and shot down from 500 yards.

At this stage in the fight it became clear that the enemy bomber pilots felt themselves to be no match for the British. It was generally observed that as soon as contact was established they jettisoned their bombs, then broke formation and turned at once for their base. Thus, twenty Dornier 215's were encountered over the London Docks flying in a diamond formation escorted by Me. 109's "stepped up" to 22,000 feet. The bombers were broken up by a level quarter attack, and this enabled our intercepting Squadron to pursue them relentlessly and shoot most of them down.

Occasionally in this confused and struggling fight



the British Squadrons found themselves temporarily outnumbering the enemy. Thus at 12.15 a mixed force of Hurricanes and Spitfires amounting to the greater part of five Squadrons was over the south of the Thames, somewhere near Hammersmith. Here they encountered an inferior number of the enemy and did terrible execution.

But it was seldom that we had the advantage in numbers. The enemy, however, seemed unable to profit by his numerical superiority. A single Hurricane, for example, encountered twelve yellow-nosed Messerschmitts flying straight at it. The pilot dived under them, but swooped upwards and shot down the rear aircraft from directly underneath. As he still had plenty of speed the British pilot half rolled off the top of his loop and followed the enemy formation, which had not apparently perceived the fate of their comrade in the rear rank. The British pilot accordingly destroyed another enemy aircraft from the rear and damaged a second before the Germans became aware of what was happening, and he was forced, being still in the numerical inferiority of nine to one, to break off the action.

The fight was all over by 12.30, and by the time the citizens of London and the south-east of England were sitting down to their Sunday dinner the enemy were in full flight to their bases in Northern France. One of those citizens had special cause to rejoice in the result of the fighting. The Prime Minister had spent the morning in one of the Operations Rooms of No. 11 Group. It was observed that for once his cigar remained unlit as he followed the swift changes of the battle depicted on the table map before him.

Some of the enemy had for a brief moment succeeded in penetrating into the centre of the capital, but they dropped only a few bombs. The fire was too hot, the



defence too strong. Seventy of the estimated two hundred and fifty aircraft in the attack, equalling twenty-eight per cent., were seen to crash that morning, ten more were considered probably to have been destroyed, and twenty-eight were observed by our pilots to break off action in a damaged condition. These figures, compiled immediately after the fight and in accordance with the very strict rules applied by the Royal Air Force to pilots' reports, probably underestimate the casualties they inflicted. Even so, the Luftwaffe lost slightly over forty-three per cent. of the aircraft used in this morning attack.

Despite the sound and fury of battle that sunny autumn day, the citizens of London had their Sunday dinner in peace. A lull ensued for about an hour and a half. Then, shortly after 2 P.M., fresh enemy forces returned to the attack in about the same strength as had been employed that morning. German aircraft crossed the coast near Dover in two waves, the first of one hundred and fifty, the second of one hundred. These formations spread over the south-east and south-west of Kent and over Maidstone.

Before they could proceed farther they were intercepted by fighters of the Royal Air Force. Twenty-one Squadrons were sent into the air and twenty-one Squadrons made contact with the enemy. This time the numbers on each side were fairly equal, and the fighting superiority of the British force was immediately established. Our fighters tore into the enemy's formations, ripping through them like a knife through calico. That was how it sounded from the ground. So determined was the British defence, so effective these tactics, that the German formations were again instantly broken up. This was the opportunity for each pilot to single out an adversary, and in a few moments the sky was again a battlefield. In all that space from the

Thames Estuary to Dover, from London to the coast, dog-fights were soon in furious progress. Squadrons were swiftly scattered so that two which took off together from their base might, fifteen minutes later, be fighting fifty miles apart.

There was nothing haphazard about this interception of the enemy. It was only possible on such a scale and in so effective a manner because every detail had been planned and tested in the fighting of the previous months. So, as reports came through of the German approach, we were able to despatch from the correct tactical points enough Squadrons to achieve complete interception and the best results, without dissipating our forces. The general principle applied in coping with earlier assaults having proved so successful it was put into effect in this second great attack. Certain Squadrons were detailed to deal with the enemy screen of high-flying fighters half-way between London and the coast. This enabled the others to attack the bomber formations and their close escort before they reached the line of fighter aerodromes east and south of London. Those of the enemy who succeeded in penetrating these defences—some seventy or so—were tackled by Squadrons of Hurricanes, mostly from Nos. 10 and 12 Groups, who came into action over the capital itself. They also pursued stragglers. As in the morning's fighting, some two hundred individual combats took place and, although no two were quite alike, the general pattern was the same.

"I engaged the enemy in formation, causing them to scatter in all directions," ran the report of one pilot. "We sighted a strong formation of enemy aircraft," wrote another, "and carried out a head-on attack. The enemy scattered, jettisoned their bombs and turned for home. We encountered heavy cannon fire. . . ." The reports are laconic: "The whole of the nose, in-



cluding the pilot's cockpit, was shot away. . . ." "I saw tracer flying past my left wing and saw an Me. 109 attack me. . . ." "I saw his perspex burst and the enemy aircraft spun down. . . ." "I did not consider it worth while to waste any more ammunition upon it. . . ." "I then looked for more trouble and saw an He. 111. I attacked and closed to about 10 feet. . . ." "I gave him everything I had. . . ." "Aircraft became uncontrollable. I baled out, coming down with left arm paralysed (afterwards learned dislocated). . . ."

As in the morning a single British aircraft, in this case a Hurricane, piloted by a Group Captain, encountered a large formation of German aircraft, both fighters and bombers, and went into the attack alone.

"There were," he said on his return, "no other British fighters in sight, so I made a head-on attack on the first section of the bombers, opening at 600 yards and closing to 200 yards." After describing how all alone he broke up the enemy formation the Group Captain adds, "I made further attacks on the retreating bombers, each attack from climbing beam. . . . One Dornier left the formation and lost height. With no ammunition left I could not finish it off. I last saw the bomber at 3,000 feet dropping slowly."

So it appears that each pilot had his own swift decisions to make, his own problems to meet. He was not found wanting. While the fight lasted the Germans were destroyed at the rate of two aircraft a minute. That afternoon's attack cost them ninety-seven destroyed. In the entire day we lost twenty-five aircraft, but fourteen pilots were saved.

Such was a typical day's fighting in a battle which lasted for nearly three months over the south of England.

*The Battle of Britain*

## SHIPS AND SEAMEN

### SIR RICHARD GRENVILLE AND THE *REVENGE*

Sir Walter Raleigh's account of this stirring naval episode is contained in Hakluyt's *The Principal Navigations of the English Nation*, where it has the following heading: "A report of the truth of the fight about the isles of Azores, the last of August, 1591, betwixt the *Revenge*, one of her Majesty's ships, and an Armada of the King of Spain: Penned by the honourable Sir Walter Raleigh, knight."

Readers will find it interesting to compare this story with that of H.M.S. *Hardy* in the Battle of Narvik, nearly 350 years later.

THE Lord Thomas Howard with six of her Majesty's ships, six victuallers of London, the barque *Raleigh*, and two or three other pinnaces riding at anchor near unto Flores, one of the westerly islands of the Azores, the last of August in the afternoon, had intelligence by one Captain Middleton of the approach of the Spanish Armada. Which Middleton, being in a very good sailer, had kept them company three days before, of good purpose, both to discover their forces the more, as also to give advice to my Lord Thomas of their approach.

He had no sooner delivered the news but the fleet was in sight. Many of our ships companies were on shore in the island, some providing ballast for their ships, others filling of water and refreshing themselves from the land with such things as they could, either for money or by force, recover. By reason whereof our ships being all pestered and everything out of order, very light for want of ballast, and that which was most to our disadvantage, the one half-part of the men of every ship sick and utterly unserviceable: for in the *Revenge* there were ninety diseased: in the *Bonaventure*, not so many in health as could handle her mainsail;



for had not twenty men been taken out of a barque of Sir George Carey's, his being commanded to be sunk, and those appointed to her, she had hardly ever recovered England. The rest for the most part were in little better state.

The names of Her Majesty's ships were these as followeth: the *Defiance*, which was admiral, the *Revenge*, vice-admiral, the *Bonaventure* commanded by Captain Cross, the *Lion* by George Fenner, the *Foresight* by Master Thomas Vavasour, and the *Crane* by Duffild. The *Foresight* and the *Crane* being but small ships; only the other were of the middle size; the rest, besides the barque *Raleigh*, commanded by Captain Thin, were victuallers, and of small force or none.

The Spanish fleet having shrouded their approach by reason of the island, were now so soon at hand as our ships had scarce time to weigh their anchors, but some of them were driven to let slip their cables and set sail. Sir Richard Grenville was the last that weighed, to recover the men that were upon the island, which otherwise had been lost.

The Lord Thomas, with the rest, very hardly recovered the wind, which Sir Richard Grenville not being able to do, was persuaded by the master and others to cut his mainsail, and cast about, and to trust to the sailing of the ship; for the squadron of Seville were on his weather bow. But Sir Richard utterly refused to turn from the enemy, alleging that he would rather choose to die than to dishonour himself, his country, and her Majesty's ship, persuading his company that he would pass through the two squadrons in despite of them, and enforce those of Seville to give him way. Which he performed upon divers of the foremost, who, as the mariners term it, sprang their luff, and fell under the lee of the *Revenge*. But the other course had been the better, and might right well have

been answered in so great an impossibility of prevailing. Notwithstanding, out of the greatness of his mind he could not be persuaded.

In the meanwhile, as he attended those which were nearest him, the great *San Philip*, being in the wind of him and coming towards him, becalmed his sails in such sort as the ship could neither make way nor feel the helm, so huge and high-cargoed was the Spanish ship, being of a thousand and five hundred tons. Who after laid the *Revenge* aboard. When he was thus bereft of his sails, the ships that were under his lee luffing up, also laid him aboard: of which the next was the admiral of the Biscayans, a very mighty and puissant ship commanded by Brittandona. The said *Philip* carried three tier of ordnance on a side, and eleven pieces in every tier. She shot eight forthright out of her chase, besides those of her stern ports.

After the *Revenge* was entangled with this *Philip*, four others boarded her: two on her larboard and two on her starboard. The fight thus beginning at three of the clock in the afternoon, continued very terrible all that evening. But the great *San Philip*, having received the lower tier of the *Revenge*, discharged with cross-bar shot, shifted herself with all diligence from her sides, utterly misliking her first entertainment. Some say that the ship foundered, but we cannot report it for truth unless we were assured.

The Spanish ships were filled with companies of soldiers, in some two hundred besides the mariners; in some five, in others eight hundred. In ours there were none at all beside the mariners, but the servants of the commanders and some few voluntary gentlemen only.

After many interchanged volleys of great ordnance and small shot, the Spaniards deliberated to enter the *Revenge*, and made divers attempts, hoping to force her by the multitudes of their armed soldiers and musketeers,



but were still repulsed again and again, and at all times beaten back into their own ships or into the seas.

In the beginning of the fight, the *George Noble*, of London, having received some shot through her by the Armadas, fell under the lee of the *Revenge*, and asked Sir Richard what he would command him, being but one of the victuallers, and of small force: Sir Richard bid him save himself and leave him to his fortune.

After the fight had thus, without intermission, continued while the day lasted and some hours of the night, many of our men were slain and hurt, and one of the great galleons of the Armada, and the admiral of the hulks both sunk; and in many other of the Spanish ships great slaughter was made. Some write that Sir Richard was very dangerously hurt almost in the beginning of the fight, and lay speechless for a time ere he recovered. But two of the *Revenge's* own company brought home in a ship of Lime from the islands, examined by some of the lords and others, affirmed that he was never so wounded as that he forsook the upper deck till an hour before midnight, and then being shot into the body with a musket as he was dressing, was again shot into the head, and withal his surgeon wounded to death. This agreeth also with an examination taken by Sir Francis Godolphin of four other mariners of the same ship, being returned, which examination the said Sir Francis sent unto Master William Killigrew of her Majesty's privy chamber.

But to return to the fight. The Spanish ships which attempted to board the *Revenge*, as they were wounded and beaten off, so always others came in their places, she having never less than two mighty galleons by her sides, and aboard her. So that ere the morning, from three of the clock the day before, there had fifteen several Armadas assailed her, and all so ill-approved their entertainment as they were, by break of day, far

more willing to hearken to a composition than hastily to make any more assaults or entries. But as the day increased, so our men decreased; and as the light grew more and more, by so much more grew our discomforts. For none appeared in sight but enemies, saving one small ship called the *Pilgrim*, commanded by Jacob Whiddon, who hovered all night to see the success, but in the morning bearing with the *Revenge*, was hunted like a hare amongst many ravenous hounds, but escaped.

All the powder of the *Revenge* to the last barrel was now spent, all her pikes broken, forty of her best men slain, and the most part of the rest hurt. In the beginning of the fight she had but one hundred free from sickness, and fourscore and ten sick, laid in hold upon the ballast. A small troop to man such a ship, and a weak garrison to resist so mighty an army. By those hundred all was sustained, the volleys, boardings, and enterings of fifteen ships of war, besides those which beat her at large. On the contrary, the Spanish were always supplied with soldiers brought from every squadron, all manner of arms and powder at will. Unto ours there remained no comfort at all, no hope, no supply, either of ships, men, or weapons; the masts all beaten overboard, all her tackle cut asunder, her upper-work altogether razed, and in effect evened she was with the water; but the very foundation or bottom of a ship, nothing being left overhead either for flight or defence.

Sir Richard finding himself in this distress and unable any longer to make resistance, having endured in this fifteen hours' fight the assault of fifteen several Armadas, all by turns aboard him, and by estimation eight hundred shot of great artillery, besides many assaults and entries; and that himself and the ship must needs be possessed by the enemy, who were now all



cast in a ring about him (the *Revenge* not able to move one way or other, but as she was moved by the waves and billow of the sea) commanded the master gunner, whom he knew to be a most resolute man, to split and sink the ship; that thereby nothing might remain of glory or victory to the Spaniards; seeing in so many hours' fight and with so great a navy they were not able to take her, having had fifteen hours' time, above ten thousand men and fifty, and three sail of men-of-war to perform it withal: and persuaded the company, or as many as he could induce, to yield themselves unto God, and to the mercy of none else; but as they had, like valiant resolute men, repulsed so many enemies, they should not now shorten the honour of their nation by prolonging their own lives for a few hours or a few days.

The master gunner readily condescended, and divers others; but the captain and the master were of another opinion, and besought Sir Richard to have care of them: alleging that the Spaniard would be as ready to entertain a composition as they were willing to offer the same: and that there being divers sufficient and valiant men yet living, and whose wounds were not mortal, they might do their country and prince acceptable service hereafter. And whereas Sir Richard had alleged that the Spaniards should never glory to have taken one ship of her Majesty, seeing they had so long and so notably defended themselves; they answered that the ship had six foot water in hold, three shot under water, which were so weakly stopped as with the first working of the sea she must needs sink, and was besides so crushed and bruised as she could never be removed out of the place.

And as the matter was thus in dispute, and Sir Richard refusing to hearken to any of those reasons, the master of the *Revenge* (while the captain won unto

him the greater party) was conveyed upon the general Don Alfonso Bacan. Who (finding none over hasty to enter the *Revenge* again, doubting lest Sir Richard would have blown them up and himself, and perceiving by the report of the master of the *Revenge* his dangerous disposition) yielded that all their lives should be saved, the company sent for England, and the better sort to pay such reasonable ransom as their estate would bear, and in the mean season to be free from galley or imprisonment. To this he so much the rather condescended as well, as I have said, for fear of further loss and mischief to themselves, as also for the desire he had to recover Sir Richard Grenville, whom for his notable valour he seemed greatly to honour and admire.

When this answer was returned, and that safety of life was promised, the common sort being now at the end of their peril, the most drew back from Sir Richard and the master gunner, being no hard matter to dissuade men from death to life. The master gunner, finding himself and Sir Richard thus prevented and mastered by the greater number, would have slain himself with a sword had he not been by force withheld and locked into his cabin. Then the general sent many boats aboard the *Revenge*, and divers of our men, fearing Sir Richard's disposition, stole away aboard the general and other ships.

Sir Richard, thus over-matched, was sent unto by Alfonso Bacan to remove out of the *Revenge*, the ship being marvellous unsavoury, filled with blood and bodies of dead and wounded men like a slaughter-house. Sir Richard answered that he might do with his body what he list, for he esteemed it not; and as he was carried out of the ship he swooned, and reviving again, desired the company to pray for him.

The general used Sir Richard with all humanity, and left nothing unattempted that tended to his recovery,



highly recommending his valour and worthiness, and greatly bewailing the danger wherein he was, being unto them a rare spectacle, and a resolution seldom approved, to see one ship turn toward so many enemies, to endure the charge and boarding of so many huge Armadas, and to resist and repel the assaults of so many soldiers. All which and more is confirmed by a Spanish captain of the same Armada, and a present actor in the fight, who being severed from the rest in a storm was by the *Lion* of London a small ship taken, and is now prisoner in London.

There were slain and drowned in this fight well-near one thousand of the enemies, and two special commanders, Don Luis de Saint John, and Don George de Prunaria de Mallaga, as the Spanish captain confesseth, besides divers others of special account, whereof as yet report is not made.

The admiral of the hulks and the *Ascension* of Seville were both sunk by the side of the *Revenge*; one other recovered the road of Saint Michael and sunk also there; a fourth ran herself with the shore to save her men. Sir Richard died, as it is said, the second or third day aboard the general, and was by them greatly bewailed. What became of his body, whether it were buried in the sea or on the land, we know not. The comfort that remaineth to his friends is that he hath ended his life honourably in respect of the reputation won to his nation and country, and of the same to his posterity, and that, being dead, he hath not outlived his own honour.

For the rest, her Majesty's ships that entered not so far into the fight as the *Revenge*, the reasons and causes were these. There were of them but six in all, whereof two but small ships; the *Revenge* engaged past recovery. The island of Flores was on the one side, fifty-three sail of the Spanish, divided into squadrons, on the other;

all as full filled with soldiers as they could contain; almost the one half of our men sick and not able to serve, the ships grown foul and scarcely able to bear any sail for want of ballast, having been six months at the sea before.

If all the rest had entered, all had been lost, for the very hugeness of the Spanish fleet, if no other violence had been offered, would have crushed them between them into shivers. Of the which the dishonour and loss to the Queen had been far greater than the spoil or harm that the enemy could any way have received.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH  
*The Principal Navigations of the English Nation*



## A LIFE-BOAT TO THE RESCUE

The story of the life-boat service is the story of human nature at its best; of heroic deeds steadily and quietly performed for the benefit of those in peril. The episode which follows is one of hundreds which this fine service has to its credit. The life-boat of which the story tells—Ramsgate's *City of Bradford*—was a famous one in its day, and was responsible for many stirring rescues.

In January, 1881, the *Indian Chief*, a sailing ship of 1238 tons, ran aground on the treacherous sands off the North Kent coast during a violent storm. The Ramsgate life-boat and tug immediately put out to its assistance. Afterwards the coxswain of the life-boat told his story to the correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, Mr Clark Russell (a famous writer of sea-stories), and the following account is taken from the columns of that newspaper.

NEWS was brought to Ramsgate that a large ship was ashore on the Long Sand, and Captain Braine, the harbour-master, immediately ordered the tug and life-boat to proceed to her assistance. It was then blowing a heavy gale of wind, though it came much harder some hours afterwards; and the moment we were clear of the piers we felt the strength of it.

Our boat is considered a very fine one. I know there is no better on the coasts, and there are two in Great Britain bigger. She was presented to the Royal National Life-boat Institution by Bradford, and named after that town. But it is ridiculous to talk of bigness when it means only forty-two feet long, and when a sea is raging round you heavy enough to swamp a line-of-battle ship. I had my eye on the tug—named the *Vulcan*, sir—when she met the first of the seas, and she was tossed up like a ball; you could see her starboard paddle going round in the air high enough for a coach to pass under; and when she struck the hollow she dished a sea over her bows that only left her stern-post showing.

We were towing head to wind, and the sea was flying over the boat in clouds. Every man of us was soaked to the skin, in spite of our overalls, by the time we had brought the Ramsgate sands abeam; but there were a good many miles to be gone over before we could make the Knock Lightship; and so you see, sir, it was much too early for taking notice that things were not over and above comfortable.

We did get out the sail-cover—a piece of tarpaulin—to make a shelter, and rigged it against the mast, seizing it to the burtons; but it hadn't been up two minutes when a heavy sea hit and washed it right aft in rags; so there was nothing for it but to hold on to the thwarts, and to shake ourselves as the water came over.

I never remember a colder wind. And I don't say this because I happened to be out in it. Old Tom Cooper, one of the best boatmen in all England, sir, who made one of our crew, agreed with me that it was more like a flaying machine than a natural gale of wind. The feel of it in the face was like being gnawed by a dog. I only wonder it didn't freeze the tears it fetched out of our eyes.

We were heading N.E., and the wind was blowing from N.E. The North Foreland had been a bit of shelter, like; but when we had gone clear of that, and the ocean lay ahead of us, the seas were furious—miles long they seemed, sir, like an Atlantic sea; and it was enough to make a man hold his breath to watch how the tug wallowed and tumbled into them. I sang out to Dick Goldsmith.

“Dick,” I said, “she's slowed, d'ye see? She'll never be able to meet it.” For she had slackened her engines down to a mere crawl, and I really did think they meant to give up. I could see Alf Page—the master of her—coming and going on the bridge, like the moon when the clouds sweep over it, as the seas smothered



him up one moment, and left him shining in the sun the next. But there was to be no giving up for the tug's crew, any more than for the life-boat's. She held on, and we followed.

Somewhere abreast of the Elbow Buoy, a smack that running before it ported her helm to speak to us. Her skipper had just time to yell out: "A vessel on the Long Sand!" and we to wave our hands, when he was astern and out of sight in a haze of spray. Presently, a collier with her fore-t'gallant-yard gone passed us. She was cracking on to carry the news of the wreck to Ramsgate, and running awash under her topsails and foresail. They raised a cheer, for they guessed our errand; and then, like the smack, she was astern and out of sight. The rush of the gale was blinding, and the cold seemed to cut your bones.

Bad as our plight was, the tug's crew were no better off. Their wheel is forrard, and so you may suppose that the fellow who steered has his share of the seas. The others stood by to relieve him; and for the matter of water shipped she was like a rock in a heavy seaway; the waves striking her bows and flying pretty nigh as high as her funnel, to blow the whole length of her and fall aft like the tumble of a cart-load of bricks. I want to tell what they went through, for the way they were knocked about was something fearful, to be sure.

By half-past four in the afternoon it was drawing on dusk; and about that time we sighted the revolving light of the Kentish Knock Lightship, and a little after five we were pretty close to her. Dark as it was, we could see her flung up, and rushing down, fit to capsize her over and over; and the way she pitched and went clean out of sight, and then raced up the black heights of water, gave me a better notion of the fearfulness of that sea than I got by watching the tug or our own lively

stepping. The tug hailed her first, and two men looking over her side answered, but what they said didn't reach us in the life-boat. Then the steamer towed us abreast, but the tide caught our warp, and gave us a sheer that brought us too close alongside of her. When the sea took her she seemed to hang right over us; and the sight of that great, dark hull, looking as if, when it fell, it must come right atop of us, made us anxious to sheer clear, I can tell you.

I sang out: "Have you seen the ship?" and one of the men bawled back: "Yes." "How does she bear?" "Nor'west by south." "Have you seen anything going to her?" The answer I caught was: "A boat." Some of our men said the answer was: "A life-boat," but most of us only heard: "A boat. . . ."

The tug was now plunging ahead, and we drew past the lightship. Ten minutes after, Tom Friend sings out: "They're burning a light aboard of her!" and, looking astern, I saw they had fired a red signal light that was blazing over her bulwarks in a long shower of sparks. So the tug put her helm down to go back, and we were brought broadside on to the sea.

Then we felt the power of those waves, sir. It seemed a miracle we were not rolled over and drowned, every man of us. We clenched our teeth and held on. Twice the boat was filled, and the water up to our throats. "Look out for it, men!" was always the cry; and every upward send emptied that noble little craft out, like pulling out a plug in a wash-basin; and in a few minutes we were again alongside the lightship. This time, there were six or seven men looking over her side.

"What d'ye want?" we shouted. "Did you see the Sunk Lightship's rocket?" they all yelled together. "Yes. Did you say you saw a boat?" "No," they answered; showing we had mistaken their reply before. On this, I shouted to the tug: "Pull us round to the'



Long Sand Head Buoy!" And in a moment we were under way again, meeting the tremendous seas.

There was only a little heel of a moon, westerling fast, and what there was of it showed but now and again, as the clouds opened and let the light of it through. Indeed, it was very dark, but there was a kind of gleam in the foam that enabled us to mark the tug ahead.

"Bitter cold work, Charlie," says old Tom Cooper to me; "but," says he, "it's colder for the poor wretches aboard the wreck, if they're alive to feel it." The thought of them made our own hardship small, and we were peering and peering into the blackness around, but there was nothing to be spied, only now and again long whiles apart the flash of a rocket in the sky from the Sunk Lightship. From time to time we burned a hand signal—a light, sir, that's fired something after the manner of a gun. You fit it into a wooden tube, and give a sort of hammer at the end a smart blow, and the flame rushes out, making a good bright light. Ours were green lights, and whenever I set one flaring I couldn't help taking notice of the look of the men. It was a queer sight, I assure you, to see them all as green as leaves, with their cork jackets swelling out their bodies, so's to make them scarcely like human beings; and the black water as high as our mast-head, or howling away below us on either side.

There was never a sign of the wreck, and staring over the edge of the boat into the salt and the wind and the darkness was like trying to see through the bottom of a well. So we began to talk the matter over, and Tom Cooper says: "We'd better stop here and wait for daylight!" "I'm for stopping, too," says Steve Goldsmith. And Bob Penny says: "We're here to fetch the wreck, and fetch it we will, if we wait a week."

"Right," says I; and, all hands being agreed, with-

out any more talk, sir—though I dare say most of our hearts were at home, and our wishes alongside our hearths, and the fires in them—we all of us put hands to our mouths, and made one great cry of: “*Vulcan*, ahoy!”

The tug dropped astern. “What d’ye want?” sings out the skipper, when he gets within speaking distance. “There’s nothing to be seen of the wreck, so we’d better stand by for the night,” I answered. “Very good,” he says. And then the tug, without another word from the crew, and the water thundering over her bows like cliffs, went back to her station ahead, her paddles going just fast enough to keep her from dropping astern.

As coxswain of the life-boat, I take no credit for deciding to lie-to all night; but I’m bound to say a word for the two crews, who made up their minds with never a murmur, never a second’s hesitation, to face the bitter cold and fierce seas of that long darkness, so’s to be on the spot to help their fellow-creatures when dawn broke and showed us where they were. I know there are sailors all around our coasts who would have done likewise. Only read what the life-boatmen did in the north, Newcastle way, during the gales last October. But no matter who may be the men who do what they think their duty, whether they belong to the north or the south, they deserve the encouragement of praise. A man likes to feel when he’s done his best that his fellow men think well of his work. If I had not been one of that crew I should wish to say a bit more; but no false pride shall make me say less, sir; and I do thank God for the resolution He put into us, and for the strength He gave us to keep it.

All we could do now was to make ourselves as comfortable as we could. Our tow-rope veered us out a long way; too far astern for the tug to help us as break-water; and the way we were flung toward the sky with



half our keel out of water, and then flung into the hollow—like falling from the top of a house, sir—while the heads of the seas blew into and through us all the time, made us reckon that, so far from getting any rest, our time would be busy preventing ourselves being washed overboard.

We lay in a lump together for warmth, and a fine show we made, I dare say; for a cork-jacket, even when a man stands upright, isn't reckoned to improve his figure, and as we all had cork-jackets on, and oil-skins, and many of us sea-boots, you may guess what a raffle of legs and arms we showed, as we sprawled in the bottom of the boat upon one another. Sometimes it would be Johnny Goldsmith—for we'd three Goldsmiths: Steve and Dick and Johnny—growling underneath that somebody was crushing his leg; then maybe Harry Meader would bawl that there was a man sitting on his head; and once Tom Friend swore his arm was broke; but my opinion is, sir, it was too cold to feel inconveniences of that kind, and I believe some wouldn't have known if their arms and legs really had been broke, until they tried to use 'em; for the cold seemed to take all feeling out of the blood.

"Charlie Fish," says Tom Cooper to me, in a grave voice, "what would some o' them young gentlemen as comes to Ramsgate in the summer, and says they'd like to go out in the life-boat, think of this?" This made me laugh; and then young Tom Cooper votes for a nipper of rum all round, and as it was drawing on for one o'clock in the morning then, and some of the men were groaning with cold, and pressing themselves against the thwarts with the pain of it, I made no objection, and the liquor went round. I always take a cake of Fry's chocolate with me when I go out in the life-boat, as I find it very supporting, and I had a mind to have a mouthful now; but when I got to the locker

I found it full of water, my chocolate paste, and the biscuit a mass of pulp. This was hard luck, as there was nothing else to eat, and there was no getting near the tug in that sea, unless we wanted to be smashed into staves. However, we hadn't come out to enjoy ourselves, so nothing was said, and we lay hugging one another for warmth till the morning broke.

The first man to see to leeward was old Tom's son, young Tom Cooper; and in a moment he bawled out: "There she is!" pointing like a madman.

Morning had only just broke; the light was grey and dim, and down in the west it still seemed to be night. The air was full of spray, and scarcely were we atop of the sea, than we were rushing like an arrow into the hollow again; so young Tom must have had eyes like a hawk to have seen her. But the moment he sang out and pointed, all hands cried: "There she is!"

But what was it, sir? Only a mast, about three miles off; just a single mast sticking up out of the white water, as thin and faint as a spider's line. Yet that was the ship we'd been waiting all night to see. There she was, and my heart thumped in my ears the moment my eye fell on that mast.

But, Lord, sir, the fearful sea that was raging between her and us! Where we were was deepish water, and the sea regular; but all about the wreck was the sand, and the water about it running in fury all ways at once; rushing up in tall columns of foam as high as a ship's main yard, and thundering so loudly that though we were to windward we could hear it miles off, through all the gale, and the boiling of the seas around us. It might have shook even a man that wanted to die to look at it, if he didn't know what the *Bradford* can go through.

I ran my eye over the men's faces. "Let slip the tow-rope!" bawled Dick Goldsmith. "Up foresail!" I



shouted. And two minutes after first sighting that mast we were dead before the wind, our storm foresail taut as a drum-skin, and our boat's stem heading full for the broken seas and the wrecked ship in the midst of them.

I reckon it was well there was something in front to keep our eyes that way, or the sight of the high and frightful seas that raged astern after us might have played Old Harry with some tired nerves. Some of the seas came with such force that they leapt clean over the boat, so that the air was dark with water flying a dozen yards over our heads in broad, solid sheets. They would fall with a roar like the explosion of a gun, a dozen fathoms ahead. But we took no thought of them, even when we were in the thick of the broken water and all hands holding on to the thwarts for dear life. Every thought was for the mast that was growing bigger and clearer. Sometimes, when a sea hove us extra high, we could just make out the hull, with water white as milk flying over it.

The mast was what they call 'bright'; that is, scraped and varnished; and we knew that if there was anything living aboard the doomed ship we should find it on that mast. So we strained our eyes with all our might, but could make out nothing that looked like a man. Then on a sudden I caught sight of a length of canvas streaming out from the top, and, all of us seeing it, we raised a shout; then a few minutes after we could see the men. They were all in yellow oilskins, and the mast being of that colour was the reason why we hadn't seen them sooner.

They looked a whole mob of people, and one of us sang out: "All hands are there!" And I answered: "Ay, the whole ship's company; and we'll have 'em all!" For though, as we afterwards knew, there were only eleven of them, they looked a great number,

huddled together in that top, and I made sure the whole ship's company was there.

By this time we were pretty close to the ship, and a fearful wreck she looked with her main and mizzen masts gone, and her bulwarks washed away, and great fids of timber and planking ripping out of her with every pour of the seas. We let go our anchor fifteen fathoms to windward of her, and as we did so we saw the poor fellows aboard unlashng themselves, and dropping one by one over the top into the lee rigging.

As we veered out cable and drove down under her stern, I shouted to the men on the wreck to bend a bit of wood on to a line and throw it over for us to lay hold on. They did this, but they had to get aft first, and again and again I feared for the poor half-perished creatures, as I saw them clambering along the lee rail, stopping and hanging on as the mountainous seas swept over the hull, and then creeping a bit farther aft in the pause.

There was a horrible raffle of spars and canvas and rigging under her lee; but we couldn't guess what a fearful sight was there, until, our hawser being fast to the wreck, we had hauled the life-boat close under her quarter. There looked to be a whole score of dead bodies washing about among the spars. It stunned me for a moment, for I had thought all hands were in the fore-top, and never dreamt of so many lives having been lost. Seventeen were drowned, and there they were, most of them, and the body of the captain lashed to the head of the mizzen-mast, so as to look as if he were leaning over it, his head stiff upright, and his eyes watching us, and the stir of the seas making him seem to be struggling to get at us.

I thought he was alive, and cried to the men to hand him in; but some one said he was killed when the mizzen fell, and had been dead four or five hours. This



was a dreadful shock. I never remember the like of it. I can hardly get those fixed eyes out of my sight, now; and I lie awake for hours of a night, and so do Tom Cooper and others of us, seeing those bodies, torn by the spars, cut and bleeding, floating in the water alongside the miserable ship.

We saved the eleven men, and I've since heard that all of them are doing well. . . .

*Daily Telegraph*

## STANDING BY

On Sunday, January 24, 1926, the British tramp steamer *Antinoe* sent out a radio S O S from the middle of the Atlantic. The deck was swept by great rollers, and she had developed an ominous list to starboard. The call for assistance was answered by the American liner S.S. *President Roosevelt*. Wireless messages were exchanged between the two ships, and at last they came in sight of each other.

AIDED by the radio direction finder, the *Roosevelt* had tracked down the *Antinoe* unerringly. Upton (the *Roosevelt's* radio operator) had received the S O S at five that morning; they were alongside the half-submerged wreck at 12.30 P.M. Upton said she presented a direful sight, low in the water, with a bad list, no motive power, and completely at the mercy of the sea.

The American liner took up her position about a half-mile to windward and began pumping over fuel oil, to which manœuvre Captain Tose later attributed the *Antinoe's* long life in such devastating seas. The wind was west—force ten, which, according to the Beaufort scale of wind velocity, is in excess of sixty miles per hour. Even the big passenger ship rolled as much as 35 degrees, as she patiently, and with infinite difficulty, kept her station close to windward. Nature varied the scenery with driving sleet and swirling snow squalls. The danger and difficulty of maintaining the *Roosevelt's* position near enough to keep the low-lying freighter in sight and to make her a beneficiary of the oil, and yet avoid the constant risk of drifting down on the smaller ship, which would have meant disaster for both, attests the seamanship of Captain Fried. The *Roosevelt*, 535 feet long with a high freeboard and a



long superstructure, drifted before the storm much faster than the small *Antinoe*, awash and with no free-board to speak of. Besides, a ship with little or no headway is difficult to handle.

Before dark, Fried radioed to the *Antinoe* to show good lights during the night so they would not lose each other. Water, however, had reached the engine-room. There was no electricity on the wallowing tramp; so they burned flares all night. Shortly after nine o'clock that evening the anxious bridge watch of the *Roosevelt* lost sight of the low-lying freighter in a driving squall of snow and spindrift. They would take another set of radio bearings and re-locate her in short order. The *Roosevelt* called. There was no answer! The *Roosevelt's* three operators looked at each other with alarm. Had she foundered? Or had another salvo of the sea swept away or irreparably damaged the *Antinoe's* radio? The *Roosevelt* kept calling—G K J Y, G K J Y—G K J Y! No answer!

What had happened was that a great sea had smashed aboard, torn a life-boat adrift from its chocks, and hurled it against the tiny and frail wireless-house. The seams opened and let in a torrent of salt water which ruined the apparatus and made Evans's room untenable. He tried frantically to dry and patch his leaking cells, dry and repair the set, and to "get back on the air." It was useless. The set was damaged beyond hope of salvage.

Most of the *Antinoe's* crew, Evans included, were ready to give up hope. No wireless—the storm was increasing to a howling gale—no motive power or electricity—the list was getting slowly but steadily worse, the water rising higher and higher towards them. They felt that the American ship, with no reply to the radio calls, would assume that the stricken vessel had sunk during the night; the search would be

abandoned and the passenger ship would resume its course, leaving them to their doom.

In utter hopelessness they set about repairing their sole remaining boat. The sea kept them busy throughout the night repelling invasion at various points. Evans spent the night in the engine-room, helping to make wedges for the bursting hatches. Water was slowly gaining in the stokehold and the engine-room until it reached and put out the last fire; with no steam, the last pump coughed, groaned, and died, giving up the struggle against the rising tide. From Evans's log again, we continue:

"Sleep was almost out of the question, but in spite of our wet clothes and empty stomachs, nature invariably conquered and we were able to snatch an hour or two, here and there, on the comparatively dry engine-room gratings."

Day broke across a sinister sea, with no sign of the *Roosevelt*. As morning became afternoon, Captain Tose ordered the boat to be made ready. It was badly damaged, but they hoped that its air-tanks would keep it afloat after the *Antinoe* sank. The boat was smashed in lowering! Their last avenue of escape cut off, despair spread through the brave little band. Yet, had they but known, this last calamity was really their salvation. Had they left in the damaged and patched boat, it is unlikely that they would ever have been heard from again.

Just as they were ready to abandon hope, the smoke of another ship was made out on the horizon. A brief spell and word went round: "The *Roosevelt*! Good old *President Roosevelt*!" Fried had kept faith. A thrill of elation and relief revived every man on the little freighter. The Americans were back again!

Here credit must be given to the fine navigating of Second Officer Erickson of the *Roosevelt*. A silent and



crippled ship drifting away at night in a swirl of snow and tossing water is not an easy object to find. The velocity and set of the current in that part of the ocean, the direction and force of the wind and the probable effect on the almost submerged hull, the freighter's rate of drift and other factors, are not mathematical certainties with which to work. Erickson, as navigator, had caught the briefest glimpse of the sun. He shot a quick 'sight' and was able to work out a fairly dependable 'fix.' A careful calculation of the *Antinoe's* probable rate and direction of drift from the point last seen was worked out, and a new course laid down. The story is continued, this time in Captain Fried's words:

"At 3.40 P.M. picked up the *Antinoe* again with engine-room and fire-room flooded, No. 3 hatch broken, and the ship listing heavily to starboard." A picture taken by a passenger on the *Roosevelt* shows the British tramp to have been a melancholy and hopeless spectacle. She flew distress flags, was heavily listed, the sport of every boarding sea.

Captain Tose now decided that he had best abandon ship. His signal flares read: "Wish to abandon ship, but have no means." Let Fried continue the narrative, as he reported it by radio to his owners in New York:

"The weather moderated, and I attempted to send a manned boat, No. 5, in charge of Chief Officer Miller. While it was being lowered a vicious squall hit us. The sea proved too rough for the boat and the men were spilled out, but they managed to get back covered with fuel oil and exhausted. Ordered men aboard."

Captain Fried's last sentence needs explanation; the crew, undaunted by their mishap, had attempted to right their boat and resume the trip to the *Antinoe*.

"By lifelines, all were recovered except Master-at-Arms Witanen, and Boatswain's Mate Steger. We

made every effort to pick up these men, but were handicapped by darkness and continued snow and hail squalls. Used searchlights. Weather increasing." Such was Fried's terse report to New York.

Steger had been stunned, and sank under the liner's stern; but Witanen, a powerful Finn, who had let go his hold on a rope ladder to assist a floundering mate, was seen clinging to the handline of the overturned boat drifting towards the *Antinoe*. He actually tried to steer the boat to the *Antinoe's* side and very nearly succeeded, passing a scant forty feet under the British freighter's stern. Second Officer Price, who has since died, seems to have been the first to see the *Roosevelt's* capsized lifeboat. The *Roosevelt* herself was hidden by a passing snow squall. Only when the lifeboat drifted nearer was it seen that a man was clinging to it. Price and Evans ran to the stern with life-rings and lines. They threw the rings, one of which landed close to Witanen. He let go of the boat and tried to swim to the ring, now so near his grasp. Evans and Price watched him breathlessly—would he make it? A wave broke over Witanen's head—he failed to reappear—swept to death within a few feet of the *Antinoe*.

The death of this heroic seaman cast a pall of gloom over the *Antinoe's* crew. Was this gallant sailor's death, within a few feet of their stern, prophetic of their own impending fate?

That night memorial services for the valiant dead were held in the saloon of the passenger ship. Every one sat on the deck, chairs were out of the question. Many, no doubt, feared that these services might prove at dawn to have been held also for the crew of the British tramp. It hardly seemed possible that the nearly submerged wreck could live through another fearful night.

Two passengers bound for Paris on a short vacation,



feeling that the delay was eating up their brief time, sent a note of protest to Captain Fried, asking that the work of rescue be taken over by some other ship!

Another passenger had an appointment in London on Saturday. This fooling round, he said, would make him miss it. It is a sad reflection that even in the shadow of heroic death, of high valour and humanitarianism, one finds such despicable baseness and selfishness; the thought that gallant men, on a sinking ship in mid-ocean in a furious storm, might be callously abandoned to their deaths to save a few vacation days or keep a business appointment!

That night the weight of weather increased, the *President Roosevelt* rolled and groaned, the gale shrieked with demoniac fury. All night the searchlight was kept trained on the dark hulk of the Britisher; they would not lose her again. All night oil was pumped overboard to break some of the turbulence of the sea. The *Antinoe* was able to show only one feeble oil lamp.

Darkness, snow flurries, high seas, and the misfortune of the early evening had made further attempts with manned boats out of the question. Not, however, for lack of volunteers, let it be recorded to the everlasting credit of American seamen. After seeing two of their shipmates swept away to death, not only did further boat crews volunteer, but there were even three who offered to attempt the suicidal swim through mountainous January seas with a line! Needless to say, Fried, depressed by the loss of two brave men, could not entertain further suggestions involving possible loss of life.

Tuesday's dawn broke stormy and ominous. High, wild seas all but hid the English tramp. Her after well-deck was constantly awash; her list had increased to 20 degrees.

At eight o'clock the *President Roosevelt* hoisted her

ensign at half-mast in mourning for her heroic dead. The *Antinoe* followed suit.

It was then decided to give the Lyle gun a chance. A Lyle gun is a projectile-throwing cannon, using a small charge of powder to hurl a line to a wreck or from ship to shore. Ten or twelve shots all ended in failure; the line would part near the projectile, or else the wind whipped it away and it fell short of its target. None passed over or near the *Antinoe*.

During the day Fried radioed to his owners his determination to stand by the freighter until he had rescued her crew—or until she foundered. It was another day of snow, sleet, and gales. The *Roosevelt* attempted to float a line down to the *Antinoe* by means of casks, but the lines became too long, sagged from their own weight and the light casks would not travel through the water. An empty life-boat, No. 3, was then drifted down on a line and it almost reached the freighter; but the exhausted crew could not secure it. Another failure, another boat lost!

Fried wirelessly to his owners: "She is riding sluggishly with her lee rail rolling under and her engine-room reported flooded. Men are still visible on the *Antinoe* in the approaching darkness. Weather continues rough and equally high seas. Standing by to make further rescue attempts at earliest possible opportunity. Look for improvement in weather to-night. Hope to keep her in view with searchlight."

There was little rest for the *Roosevelt's* operators—Upton, Smith, and Ransom. They had their regular watches to stand, their traffic to clear, while a distant listening audience 'sat in' on the drama they were witnessing. Other craft wanted to aid, but Fried felt that more doctors could not possibly help; they would only get in each other's way. He assumed sole responsibility for the rescue efforts. All through the



night, which in January on the North Atlantic is far longer than the day, Ransom, the third operator, was on the bridge straining his eyes through the murk and driving spume to spell out Evans's despairing blinker messages, and to signal back to the *Antinoe* messages of encouragement. Upton and Smith relieved him at intervals. In the wireless-room the chairs had to be lashed down, as the big liner rolled sickeningly. There was to be no sleep for any of them until the ship arrived at Plymouth. The big 5-kilowatt arc set gave them trouble; loose water washing over the uppermost deck and the top of the radio room broke down their insulation.

While the *Roosevelt's* whining arc was singing out Fried's messages, another British freighter, the *Laristan*, took her final plunge not far away. Captain Littledale, Operator Jukes, and twenty-two others of the crew went down with her as the German S.S. *Bremen* stood by helplessly, waiting for a chance to take them off. Fried's apprehension for the fate of the *Antinoe* was realized by another ship near by.

The *Roosevelt's* passengers were not enjoying themselves much, either. To see two brave men swept to their deaths, to watch a hulk with twenty-five human beings slowly sinking only a short distance away after three days and two nights of anxious watching and fruitless rescue efforts, is no pleasant experience. Several had sustained minor injuries as a result of the liner's violent lurching and rolling. The menu was limited; there was little or no comfort. Nevertheless, that night the passengers framed a resolution to Captain Fried pledging confidence and devotion in his persistent determination to save human life. No more was heard of the man with the London appointment or from the Paris-bound tourists whose vacation was being curtailed.

At 9.30 that night another life-boat was made ready,

and the volunteers mustered; but rising wind and seas, accompanied by blinding snowstorms, forced Fried to call off the attempt. At 1.30 A.M. on Wednesday the life-boat crew was again ordered to stand by, but again the order had to be cancelled. The night, however, was not spent in idleness.

Fried began what was perhaps one of the most daring and dangerous attempts ever made by one ship to lay a boat alongside a stricken sister in heavy weather. The *President Roosevelt* trailed an empty boat from a long line made fast high up on the after kingpost. The plan was to steer close under the *Antinoe's* stern and then come up sharp into the wind, hoping the line would drop over the low-lying tramp. The slightest error in timing, judgment, or in steering, or the momentary breakdown of either main or steering engines, would result in the big liner being thrown back upon the nearly spent *Antinoe* with the certain loss of both ships. The manœuvre was repeated three times, only to have the rope sag, and finally, instead of passing over the wreck, it passed under the keel and parted. The third boat was thus lost. Faint cheers from the Britisher in keen appreciation of success subsided into silence as the boat drifted away.

Two lives lost, three boats gone, to say nothing of the great quantity of oil, ropes, and other material expended. The days were slipping by, the *Antinoe* was sinking lower and lower; it seemed folly to hope that she could live another twelve hours. Still the grim Atlantic frolicked and played with the dying steamer. Seventy-two hours of unbroken effort had found Fried checkmated by the sea at every move. Here, even the stoutest-hearted sailor and the greatest humanitarian might quite reasonably have faltered and reluctantly abandoned further attempts until the weather moderated. Not Fried!



During the night Chief Engineer Turner had worked in the machine shop making more Lyle gun projectiles, this time with special coil springs. A ballistic expert on board, a Colonel Hearne, had suggested springs to take up the initial muzzle velocity strain that seemed to be parting the lines.

The weather moderated somewhat during the morning, there was no snow or hail, the wind fell, but the sea was still high and rough. It had been a night of frozen horror for the men of the *Antinoe*. Fried signalled his plans and had asked them to be on the poop ready to secure the line when it passed over them. It was bitter, freezing cold on the gale-swept, unprotected poop. They suffered intensely. Evans said they piled together in one indiscriminate heap in order to keep warm.

Spume and oil-laden spindrift broke over them. There was little buoyancy left in the poor old *Antinoe*. The list was now over 30 degrees; the after well-deck bulwarks were now never above water; she was down by the stern; and the hatch coamings on the starboard side were constantly under water. It was difficult and dangerous to make one's way about the wreck. But the *Antinoe* was hard to kill.

The improved method of firing the Lyle gun was finally rewarded by a successful shot. The line fell over the hulk. It seemed as if all the men on her rushed to grab this line, the first physical contact with the rescuing American liner. Faint shouts of joy could be heard across the water as they hauled in a heavier line and then began hauling over the boat. Cheers rose from the *Roosevelt's* decks. Soon it would be all over. The line chafed on the *Antinoe's* rail, parted, and another boat was lost. A desperate message from Evans read: "Quick aid implored!"

At four that afternoon the wind had dropped to

about twenty miles per hour, the sea moderated slightly and a fifth boat was got ready under Chief Officer Miller. Except for Fourth Officer Upton, the others were all from the engine-room: Wall, Diaz, Aranda, Albertiz, Hahn, and two Roberts. The *Antinoe* was asked where the best landing could be effected. Captain Tose replied that the starboard side near No. 1 hatch was the best.

At 7.30 P.M., after night had shut down, the passenger liner was manœuvred to a position less than a hundred yards to windward, and the boat lowered in a nice lee. It was only a short run down wind around the wallowing freighter's bow to a place abreast of No. 1 hatch. Owing to the heavy surge it was a dangerous place to hold. The lee rail was under water; a sea might throw the life-boat aboard the wreck and smash it to bits. Miller sang out: "Men of the *Antinoe*! Jump as quickly as you can! I can't make fast!"

Evans told the writer he did not see much use in jumping; it seemed as if the small craft would be crushed against the *Antinoe's* side at any moment. The boat rose and fell with the seas. As a surge carried her in, the crew bent to their oars and, by the slimmest of margins, pulled her clear again. Several times she grazed the freighter's steel sides, oars were broken in fending off. The *Antinoe's* exhausted men were slow in jumping, but Miller finally managed to get twelve in his boat. He did not dare to wait for more. He shouted: "I will be back later for you. Good luck!"

The *Roosevelt* had, in the meanwhile, taken up a position to leeward so that the boat had only another short run down wind. Evans, on the blinker, sent over: "The boat is gone." This news nearly floored those on the liner, Upton related, for everyone had thought that the boat would bring back the entire crew of the doomed freighter. Rope ladders were made ready and



lowered. Every passenger of the 200 and more aboard the *Roosevelt* lined the rail and cheered as their ship's searchlight laid down a silvery path of light across the surging waters for the small white boat bringing back its first little band of the rescued. White life-jackets set off the grimy black figures huddled in the boat. At first it had been thought that the *Antinoe's* crew were negroes, so black were they from wind-sprayed oil. Several had to be helped aboard because of injuries. All were taken to the hospital. The boat was cast adrift, too badly damaged to be of further use. That was the fifth boat to be lost.

At midnight, urgent signals from Evans on the blinker apprised the *Roosevelt* of the desperate condition of the remaining twelve men on board the *Antinoe*. With a 50-degree list and almost submerged, they expected the old ship to slip from beneath them at any moment. It seemed utter folly even to hope for the ship to live more than a few hours, to say nothing of lasting out the night, its fourth in distress. To add to Captain Fried's anxiety, Cape Race radio station broadcast another storm warning. Plainly it was "now or never."

Miller put off again at 12.40 A.M. Thursday morning in No. 3 life-boat with Third Officer Sloan and Fourth Officer Upton, Beers, Wall, Wilke, Fugelsang, Reidel, Fisher, and Caldwell, a mixed crew from all departments. Once more the American liner manoeuvred to windward, as close as possible. The boat got away in a sheltering lee. There was now a bright moon to help matters. It must have been an unforgettable picture: the small, white, tossing life-boat; the surging, heaving, dark sea; pale yellow moonbeams playing on the black, wallowing, and almost submerged hulk of the *Antinoe*.

This time Miller went around the stern of the *Antinoe* and back to a position abreast of No. 1 hatch,

Twelve more men jumped and then Captain Tose, true to the rule of the sea, was the last to leave his vessel. He had given the ship's papers to Evans to carry in a brief-case. Evans, one of the last to leave, poised for a moment on the rail, and as the surge carried the boat underneath him, he jumped. The backwash upset his calculations, it carried the boat away just as he jumped, and he landed in the cold Atlantic. He lost his grip on the brief-case and Miller fished him out with a boat-hook. Second Officer Price also had to be picked out of the water. Oars were again used to fend off the life-boat from the freighter's sides.

The second return trip was comparatively easy, a short run down wind and up under the towering and protective sides of the big vessel. The lines, ladders, and nets for the enfeebled and injured were ready. Evans said it seemed to him as if everyone on the *President Roosevelt* was lying on deck with outstretched arms to help aboard the last of the rescued. Second Operator Nelson Smith helped him aboard. Even those perfectly capable of walking had nevertheless to be carried by the enthusiastic rescuers. Captain Tose, despite his vigorous opposition, was carried feet foremost up to the bridge, where he thanked Captain Fried, who replied simply: "It has taken a long time, but it is worth it."

At 1.35 A.M. the *Roosevelt's* whistle roared out three long blasts of farewell to the still game *Antinoe*. The passengers cheered and the *President Roosevelt* resumed her long-delayed passage. "Full speed ahead" was rung down to the engineers.

Gales swept in again Thursday; the Atlantic resumed her sterner and grimmer mood. The poor old *Antinoe* sank alone; no curious mortals saw her end.

KARL BAARSLAG, S O S



## THE FIGHT OF THE *EXETER*

Off the coast of Uruguay in December, 1939, the German sea-raider, the pocket-battleship *Graf Spee*, was after a fresh victim, the French liner *Formose*. But the French ship was not entirely unprotected. Cruising somewhere in that part of the vast South Atlantic was a small squadron under the command of Commodore (now Admiral) Harwood. Though the three ships comprising his squadron were together inferior in striking-power to the highly armed German ship, there was no hesitation in their approach.

OVER the horizon towards the north-west came the out-lying ships of Commodore Harwood's squadron, *Ajax* and *Achilles*. *Achilles* was own sister to the *Ajax*, like her in outline and in guns, like her in speed—in everything. *Exeter* was the heavy ship of the three. She was the stage between the "County" class and the "Leanders," the transition ship, the first and tentative breakaway. Smaller than the "Counties," she was yet 1,000 tons bigger than the "Leanders." She was built in 1930, and carried in place of the eight 6-in. guns of the "Leanders" six 8-in. guns, as well as anti-aircraft guns and six torpedo-tubes. With 80,000 horse-power, she had a speed of 32.25 knots, and a war complement of 600 men.

She was not as good-looking, but she was a clean-lined ship with the same trawler bow and lithe hull lines of her smaller fleet-mates. But her two funnels (the second rather thinner than the first) made an ugly difference. Her importance lay within her 8-in. guns. They could outrange the 6-in. guns of the *Ajax*. They could come even within reason of the raider's guns, though few men thought they could before the action.

And yet they were too small. Eight inches is close upon 11 inches, but *Exeter's* shells weighed no more than a third even of the official weight of the 11-in. German's. At 256 pounds for each shell, she could fire a broadside of 1,536 pounds. The three ships together—using all their armament save only the light anti-aircraft guns—could fire 3,136 pounds against the 4,840 pounds of the German. Some small advantage they must have had in rate of fire, but what they had must have been overwhelmed by disadvantages of range.

If those three ships had been on paper thrown against the pocket-battleship before the war, men would again have thought of Coronel.<sup>1</sup>

Men hearing the first garbled stories of this action *did* think of Coronel. For, from Montevideo, from Buenos Aires, and from New York, the cables brought the news sooner even than the rumour of the sea: that a battle had been started, that *Achilles* had been sunk, and then—silence for a brief while. In the seaports and in the places where men could in a measure judge beyond the layman the meaning of the sea news, they thought that the report was true. And more—they thought that it was inevitable. If one ship had been sunk early, what of the other two? There was a cold apprehension on the men of the sea upon that Wednesday. Was it another Coronel?

And then, slowly, the news began to filter through, while rumour sped from the Bishop Lighthouse to the Pentland Skerries. And out of rumour came the incredible fact. . . .

Swiftly in the cool morning of that brilliant day the three ships closed, and swiftly the *Graf Spee* turned away. This was not the famous *Gefechtskehrwendung*, the

<sup>1</sup> A naval engagement of 1914 in which a British squadron was heavily defeated by a more powerful German force.



"battle turn away" of the German Navy, which was a clever tactical evolution for a fleet, but a plain turn to safety—a turn for flight.

In that first manœuvre must be read something of the history of the battle. Why did Langsdorff turn south and begin his flight so early rather than attempt an action on parallel courses? By his choice, of course, he won for himself the possibility of the turn-in to the Plate, which he eventually made. Was that in his mind even as the first shots were fired?

With *Ajax*—the "flagship" with Commodore Harwood on board—in the lead, the three British ships closed in to the attack, and the action began at extreme range. Men thought that the gap between the ranges held fate within it—that before a little ship could close the gap and strike home so far as she was able with her little guns, she would have suffered so much damage that the action would be over before it was begun.

That did not happen. There is a deal of difference between theory and practice on the sea, between the accuracy of paper plotting and the accuracy of shells upon the target of an audacious enemy, handled with intelligence and manned with courage.

The first hits of the opening stages of the action were unimportant. All three ships of the little squadron had the gift of speed; and with the engine-room staffs working magnificently in the quivering pockets of the hulls, they closed the distance of their disadvantage.

The *Graf Spee* at the beginning began to concentrate her fire upon the *Exeter*. She was the heavy ship of the three, a formidable enemy. But there must always be a question whether that early concentration was of wisdom. To the theorist it might seem that if Captain Langsdorff had concentrated upon one of the smaller ships in the first moments of the action and through the time when only the *Exeter's* guns could bear upon him

with effectiveness, he should have been able to destroy her early, and before the main phase of the battle came reduce his enemy to two targets only. For the "Leanders" were by far the lighter ships, less armoured than their bigger sister, more vulnerable to the great weight of the German shells. Experts had said that one single shell landing from an 11-in. gun within a vital spot—and there were many—would put the little cruisers out of action. Had one of them gone early, the *Graf Spee* could then have carried out her concentration on *Exeter* more surely and less harried.

But *Exeter* was made the target, and for a while at least the shooting of the raider was magnificent. She got her bracket with the first two salvos of the crucial period of the action; she registered a hit with the third. Stubbornly the *Exeter* took her punishment.

Her engines had come to full power in record time under the brilliant handling of Commander Simms. That was the first flowering of the spirit that was in her. Now, as she took salvo after salvo of the great shells of the enemy, that spirit flowered along the decks and in the turrets, in the handling-rooms and in the magazine, in the multitudinous departments of a warship's corporate being. She was engulfed in a hell of noise and smoke, and the harsh griping of explosive fumes. As her own 8-in. guns roared out they were answered flash for flash and thunder for thunder by the crashing of the German shells. A salvo destroyed the bridge and control communications, electric power failed in the ship, the dynamos were wrecked.

Brilliantly in this disaster the ship was handled. They were within torpedo range now, and the sights were on. Through the noise and the smoke, through the swift roar of the waking flames, Commander Smith got through the order to the tubes, and they were fired. And as the endless thunder of the shells



went on he got through the order for port helm and opened out the range.

Below the shells were hacking through and through the thin steel of her decks and sides. Two burst by the petrol compartment, and James McGarry, Engine-room Artificer, Second Class, stunned by the concussion, with his working party dead and dying about him, flooded the compartment and saved a fresh disaster.

Frank Bond, Engine-room Artificer, Fourth Class, in another flat, waited in the terrible fumes after an explosion and cleared his party from a magazine before he flooded that, saw to the fire main where the fire was, and fought it alone until help came.

The fore-turrets were badly hit, and Sergeant Wilde of the Royal Marines, conscious even after the frantic concussion of the hitting, put a tourniquet of rope round the stump of what had been an arm of one of his gun's crew, evacuated the gun house, and then went back and found a cordite charge burning in the rammer, and with the swift genius of improvisation made a chain of buckets and fought that fierce blaze by hand. In cold blood it seems beyond belief, but they fought that roaring cordite fire with pails of water and put it out, and Sergeant Wilde got out the remnants of that charge and hove it overboard.

The two fore-turrets were put out of action. The controls were going. They changed from No. 1 steering position to No. 2, and fire blazed above the lower position. Midshipman Don, in charge of a fire party, fought that blaze, rescued the wounded, and went to other fires.

Stoker Minhinett carried the message that the steering had been changed to No. 3 position, and, seriously wounded, refused attention till the message was delivered.

Dynamo-rooms, switchboards, engines were damaged

by the hail of steel—and still the *Exeter* fought on, firing all her torpedoes, firing her remaining guns. Commander Jennings, handling his diminishing armament with a cool determination in the very eye of disaster, tried to spot for the after-turret, standing almost over the very muzzles of the guns.

The four ships were hurtling through the water now—the *Graf Spee* at the limit of her Diesel engines; the British vessels using their speed, increasing and diminishing as the exigencies of battle made their quick demands, twisting and turning—the hounds upon the wolf. Over the calm sea they fled, their movements magnified, made monstrous by the power of the machine. A turn that to a hound would have meant a foot meant to them a curving mile of seaway. Their speeds were gigantic, their surges enormous—a great play and interchange of hurtling masses of steel weaving a grim pattern on the water, weaving death and destruction with man's substitute for thunder.

Where they had passed there was the fierce furrowing of the wakes, the upturning of the water by the shares of war. About the furrows, like monstrous pock-marks on the cross ripple of the bow waves, were the ringed scars of the shell bursts, stained and dirty against the whiteness of the spray.

Smoke trailed in low cloudlets about the sea—smoke where the *Ajax* had gone roaring past the *Formose's* course and screened her from the Germans (now far behind them where they fought), smoke where they had made new screens to foul the ranges, smoke from the flames that roared along the decks.

There where the gulls rode high in shocked amazement, there where the calm sea rolled slow beneath them to the Uruguayan shore, the battle raged. Twisting and turning, swinging from side to side, zig-zagging interminably, the wolf-hounds tore behind



the wolf; and ahead of them—sometimes almost among them as the pack advanced, harrying with every moment of the fight—the sea wolf zigzagged in its turn.

And so the *Exeter's* time came in a fantastic ten minutes that will endure for ever in the minds of the men who fought aboard her. For ten minutes she took to her salvo after salvo, swallowing the immensity of their burst, surviving the fury of their shock.

There were fires between her decks and about her bridging. There were fires in her gun-turrets. There were fires about the magazine. She was losing steam; she was losing power; she was crippled, baffled, almost exhausted. And yet she fought on to the last moment that the guns that were left to her could make the range. She lost speed and fell away, turning off to port, and circling back across the lines of battle; and the rushing speed of it took the raider from her hitting. Her fight against the enemy was done.

There still remained the fight against the ultimate disaster. They fought it gallantly below her decks, conquering the fires one by one, putting out the blaze in the Marines' barracks, making the switchboards safe again.

Marine Russell collapsed about that time. His left forearm was blown away, his right arm shattered when the turret where he worked was hit; and all through the action he had refused to go below, moving about the deck in that fierce hail of death, cheering his comrades as they fought—afterwards he died.

Warrant Shipwright Rendle worked his miracles of repair. All through the action he had done his work, shoring and bolstering against the damage. Now, as they lost speed slowly in the swell, he made the damage good, made the ship watertight again.

The *Exeter's* survival is a major tribute to the ship's construction. That she should so endure salvo after

salvo of high-explosive shell and float, shows strength beyond imagining. She had endured against all the prophets, against all the promises of the German gun-makers. She floated, and in a little while she was seaworthy and safe again.

And as the men about her worked in the urgency of that repair, they saw the fight go on beyond them, and pass beyond their ken. They saw the white-furrowed sea grown calm and blue again. They saw the pock-marks fade and diminish upon the water.

They were left alone, but they knew even then that the battle was to them. They were out of action—but they were not beyond victory. They had seen, as they endured, their own bombardment, shell for shell, crash hard upon the German. They had seen red flares of flame burst on her sides and against her control tower. They had seen her faltering—and now they saw her fly.

And as she fled they saw the little ships go after her, the young hounds of the pack, thrice gallant in pursuit.

They left the *Exeter* behind them to the north, licking her wounds and making ready to bury her many dead, and they held on with the fight towards the south.

It is not possible to say when the German Captain first made his decision to fly for Montevideo. His first intention, it would seem, was to seek safety in a running action, and hope so to cripple the pursuit that even with lack of speed he could win clear into the trackless south. He had accomplished the first part of his scheming. He had crippled the pursuit. One ship out of the three—and she the strongest—was out of action, moving slowly downwards out there from the north.

He had two options then. Seeing that in her the fight was done, he could have circled back—disregarding the lesser ships—and could, at close range, have destroyed her utterly. He did not do that. It is not easy to



understand why, except if one accepts that already the little ships had so established their moral superiority of courage that he could not face that furious determination in defence they would have shown. Fear of their audacious defence, fear of torpedo attack, fear even of their small but well-directed gunnery, must have held him to his course of flight.

And, as they chased him to the southward, he seems to have made his last decision. Shortly after the *Exeter* fell out of line the *Graf Spee* headed in towards the coast. She was hit then—and badly hit. On all our three ships they had seen the explosions, had seen the flare of flame along her upper deck that was the blazing of her seaplane and its petrol. But she had not lost speed. She had not lost, so far as they could judge, control. She was still firing. And yet she ran towards the neutral shelter. She was defeated in that moment.

[The rest of the story is now a part of world history. The *Graf Spee* sped into Montevideo harbour, and was given seventy-two hours in which to execute repairs and leave. There followed one of the most amazing episodes in naval history. Under cabled orders from Hitler himself (so it was said) the German Captain took his ship to the mouth of the River Plate, and instead of giving battle to the waiting British cruisers scuttled his great ship without firing a shot at his opponents. A few days later he shot himself, too true a seaman to endure the disgrace to German naval traditions, though too true a Nazi to disobey his leader's orders.]

A. D. DIVINE, *The Wake of the Raiders*

## THE STORY OF THE *ALTMARK*

MANY countries were thrilled—though one was highly indignant—when in February, 1940, a British destroyer boarded the German ship *Altmark* in Norwegian waters and rescued 300 prisoners who for weeks had been captive beneath her decks.

There was something of a mystery about the *Altmark*. German propaganda claimed that she was an unarmed merchant vessel plying between German and Scandinavian ports. But in reality she acted as a supply ship to the German raider the *Admiral Graf Spee*, which, some weeks before the *Altmark* affair, had been driven into a Uruguayan port by British warships, and despairing of escaping (though a heavier ship than any of her pursuers) had staggered the world by scuttling herself in the mouth of the River Plate. In addition to taking supplies to the *Graf Spee*, the *Altmark* acted as a prison ship. Part of the crews of merchant vessels captured by the German battleship were transferred to the *Altmark*.

Those who remained as prisoners on the *Admiral Graf Spee* were released when the battleship sought refuge in the port of Montevideo. They had been tolerably well-treated; but they told disturbing stories of the hardships and brutalities endured by the less fortunate prisoners of the *Altmark*. A watch for this mystery ship was instituted by the British Admiralty, but it proved difficult to trace. How was this? Well, partly of course because the sea is a large area to scour. But partly, also, because the *Altmark* had a way of changing her name, and sailing under various neutral flags—of course, quite against the rules of international law.



The lot of those prisoners who were unfortunate enough to be confined in the *Altmark* was wretched in the extreme. By rights they should have been treated as prisoners of war. But actually they were handled more as if they were criminals. The skipper of the *Altmark* was a German officer of the worst type, a loud-voiced, bullying tyrant. His junior officers were little better. Some of the crew were decent enough fellows, but they were given little chance of showing any spirit of kindness towards their captives. A seaman caught trying to relieve the lot of a prisoner by slipping him food, for instance, was most severely punished.

Conditions were terrible. There was little ventilation. The prisoners managed to bore a little hole in the side of the ship, otherwise they would have had practically no fresh air, and scarcely a glimpse of the sky. Naturally the air soon became foul. Sanitation hardly existed. Men had to sleep packed together, often on the bare planks or the steel deck plating. Some were fortunate enough to obtain pieces of carpet from the *Altmark's* pillaged cargoes: they were the lucky ones.

These conditions, bad enough in themselves, were made still worse by the bullying attitude of the German officers. There was a punishment cell only about four feet square in which men were confined for the most trifling offences, often for days at a time. There was always somebody in it, and generally a waiting-list.

Food was insufficient, and often bad. Black bread and tea were the chief articles of diet. This bread was sometimes so sour that some of the prisoners tried to make liquor out of it by distilling it in their billy-cans! As one man remarked, "It was potent all right!" "The only thing we got on board the *Altmark*," another of the prisoners afterwards said, "was a ravenous appetite."

At least one attempt was made to communicate with

the outside world. Some of the prisoners obtained a tin box, wrote a message describing their condition and whereabouts, and sealed it up inside the tin, which was made air-tight by soldering the lid on. The solder was obtained from the ship's carpenter (who incidentally received punishment afterwards for helping the British seamen). A flag was attached to the tin, and it was launched over the side of the ship. But unfortunately the affair was discovered, so the romantic message had no chance of thrilling any discoverer. Punishments of course followed. The kind-hearted German carpenter was imprisoned for three weeks, and the prisoners concerned for three days.

It seemed as if the wretched prisoners would have to tolerate their lot. Their next effort to obtain release was as unsuccessful as the first. In the course of its passage to Germany the *Altmark* had to pass through Norwegian waters. Now it is a breach of international law to convey prisoners of war through neutral territory, and the Norwegian authorities should have prevented the *Altmark* from doing so. However, they failed to act. The German ship actually put into the Norwegian port of Bergen to ask permission to pass through Norwegian waters, and was examined by Norwegian officers, but the prisoners were not discovered.

This was not through any lack of effort by the prisoners themselves to reveal their presence. In spite of threats from their guards they created a terrific hullabaloo when they realized that Norwegian warships were close at hand. They shouted, and hammered with their fists on the sides of the ship. Some blew S O S signals on whistles. One man tied a shirt to a stick and tried to wave it. A German wrested it from him. Then a red ensign was discovered, and that was waved too. But again the Germans intervened, and the flag was torn out of the prisoners' hands. Crockery was thrown



high into the air through the hatches so as to crash noisily on deck. The British seamen were driven back from the hatchway by the Germans turning the hose on them and threatening them with cudgels and revolvers. At the same time the steam deck winch was turned on so as to drown by its noise the prisoners' shouts.

In spite of German efforts to prevent discovery of the prisoners it seems hardly possible to doubt that anything like a careful examination of the ship would have revealed their presence. But such an examination was not made. No doubt one reason for this was a fear of reprisals if the *Altmark* were interfered with. But whatever the reason, the German ship was allowed to proceed on its way with its load of prisoners. These were punished for their attempts to attract attention as if they had tried to mutiny. A notice was sent down to them by Captain Dahl, the skipper; it read as follows:

"On account of to-day's behaviour of the prisoners they will get bread and water only to-morrow instead of the regular meals. Further, I have given an order that neither the Prisoner-Officer nor the Doctor will make their regular rounds after this. Any severe case of sickness can be reported on occasions of handing down the food."

Meanwhile, though the prisoners did not yet know it, help was on the way. News came through to the British Admiralty that the *Altmark* had been sighted off the coast of Norway.

Three aircraft of the R.A.F. Coastal Command were sent to try to locate the ship. Flying outside territorial waters they proceeded to comb the Norwegian coast. It was an exciting task. The airmen had been given a verbal description of the *Altmark*. For a time they could see no sign of any likely ship. Then they sighted a vessel which turned out to be the wrong one.

A little later another ship came into view. Through binoculars they detected that its funnel appeared to answer the given description. They dived down upon it to see the name painted on its stern. It was the *Altmark*!

Her location having thus been discovered she was later hailed by H.M.S. *Intrepid*, but took refuge in Josing Fjord on the coast of South Norway. The Admiralty now issued orders to the senior officer of the British destroyers in the vicinity, Captain Vian of H.M.S. *Cossack*, to enter the fjord if necessary, search the *Altmark*, and release any British prisoners. This, of course, was a violation of neutral waters, but circumstances justified the decision. However, an effort was made by the British commander to obtain the co-operation of the Norwegian navy. He suggested to the senior officer of two Norwegian warships now in the mouth of the fjord that the *Altmark* should be escorted back to Bergen and thoroughly searched. But the officer replied that the *Altmark* had already been examined at Bergen, that no prisoners had been found on board, and that she had received permission to proceed to Germany through Norwegian waters.

It was a difficult position for Captain Vian. For the time being he withdrew. But after dark he again entered the fjord. The Norwegian ships refused to assist him but did not offer to hinder him.

Then followed a thrilling scene. The fjord was covered with ice, several inches thick, except for a channel which the *Altmark* had made through it. The *Cossack* followed the track of the German ship, sweeping the ice with its searchlight. The *Altmark* was hiding round a bend in the fjord. Suddenly her pursuer came upon her, flooding her with a blaze of light, and sliding between her and the shore.

As the British ship began to draw alongside, the



*Altmark* attempted a difficult manœuvre. She was going to ram the *Cossack*! She put her engines ahead, and turned sharply to port. But it is no easy task to out-manœuvre the British sailor. The *Cossack* swung away sharply. The *Altmark*, unable to control her speed, missed the British ship and herself ran aground!

The *Cossack* now returned, and ran against the German ship head on. Grappling irons were at once used to secure her. But even before they could be brought into play the British boarding-party, led by Lieut.-Commander Turner, leapt from the *Cossack's* gun-turret on to the deck of the *Altmark*. The Germans out-numbered the British party by at least four to one, and they were quite well supplied with ammunition; but they were unable to resist the dash of the British sailors. Lieut.-Commander Turner fought his way to the bridge of the *Altmark*, using his revolver as a club, and gave his orders. The Nazi captain at first attempted to resist. But not for long. As one seaman afterwards put it, "He made one attempt to disobey, but he didn't try again." The control handle was swung to "hard astern," and the rudder and propellers of the ship driven against the ice. She was now completely out of action.

The British sailors had been ordered not to fire unless fired upon. But some of the Germans started shooting, and the British retaliated. A few Nazi sailors sprang from the ship on to the ice upon which she had gone aground, sped across the ice, climbed up the face of the cliff, and opened fire from this position. Others took shelter behind rocks and boulders at the foot of the cliff, and fired from behind these. This shooting was naturally returned.

One of the Germans fell into the icy water as he was leaping from the *Altmark*. As might be expected, the British seamen did not take the opportunity of killing

him off while he was thus at their mercy. Instead, two of them jumped in and rescued him! Later on he died of shock due to his sudden immersion in the icy water, but that of course does not detract from the typical spirit of courageous sportsmanship shown by his rescuers.

In the meantime, what of the prisoners confined under the hatches of the *Altmark*? Well, some of them were fortunate enough to hear a 'running commentary' of the whole affair, given by an officer who was in possession of a spy-hole in the hatch-covering. This commentary was 'relayed' by runners from deck to deck. The commentator was John Bammant, fourth officer of the *Dovercourt*.

The prisoners first heard that a ship was playing searchlights on the deck of the *Altmark*. Then they heard the reports of rifles and revolvers. Bammant took his stand at the spy-hole and shouted: "We're going to be rescued—I can see two ships. One is almost alongside." Then came the crash of the *Altmark's* attempt to ram the *Cossack*. A little later the lights went out, and Bammant reported: "There are nearly twenty men on guard over the hatch." There were more shots; then a voice called out: "Are there any English down there?"

The answer that greeted him can easily be imagined. Here is the rest of the story in Bammant's own words.<sup>1</sup> "Our answer came with such a roar it must have nearly knocked his head off. Then the hatch cover was prised off. One by one we climbed up to the deck. We found ourselves in a beautiful 'picture-postcard' setting. There we were, bunched up alongside a British destroyer, hemmed in by mountains capped with snow.

"The fighting seemed to have left our part of the deck. We could see a bunch of German sailors under guard on the bridge. We heard afterwards that the officer in

<sup>1</sup> This eye-witness account is quoted from *The War Weekly* with the editor's kind permission



charge of the boarding-party had fought his way up to the bridge, using his revolver as a club. Strict orders had been given to the destroyer's men not to use their weapons unless fired on. The Germans were the first to fire. Our men kept to their orders unless actually face to face with fire. The second officer of the *Altmark* was stretched out on the bridge. He had been the last one standing in the way of our men.

"As we trooped on to the deck a marine leaned out of one of the bridge windows and shouted to us. He had a water-melon beam all over his face. 'Coo, blokes,' he said, 'I've captured the ship.'

"Then some of our fellows went up to the main hatchway over the prison quarters farther along the deck. A German guard stopped us. Mr King, the senior engineer officer of the *Doric Star*, the biggest ship captured, was at the head of our men. A German officer pushed him back. Mr King is a tough little Welshman, only about five feet four inches, but he whipped round immediately with a beautiful right hook and knocked him cold.

"The destroyer men escorted us off the ship quietly, quickly, and efficiently. The officer in charge of the boarding-party, beaming all over his face, shouted over to the destroyer: 'I'm bringing the Englishmen aboard first, and then the Germans.' The shout came back: 'That's all right, old man, but we don't want the Germans.'

"Just as we were casting off we saw two Germans scrambling up the cliff face about three hundred yards away. They had escaped by jumping down on to the ice. I imagined them getting to a telephone, and that before we had time to get far from the fjord we should find ourselves visited by German bombers. Then I heard the crack of rifles. First one and then the other lost his footing and crashed down the slopes.

"When we were outside they told us they had left the commander of the *Altmark* shaking with rage at what had happened. That news gave us all a good feeling. He had treated us rottenly."

The British prisoners were taken aboard the *Cossack* and the destroyer turned and slowly steamed out of the fjord. The Germans still on board the *Altmark* were carefully covered with British Lewis guns so long as the two ships were in sight of each other. The *Cossack* was taking no chances.

At length she rounded the bend in the fjord. And so ended one of the most thrilling rescues in the pages of history, a rescue so swift and dramatic that many of the Germans scarcely realized what had happened until it was over.

But to the British Navy it was "just another little job of work."

G. F. L.



## THE BATTLE OF NARVIK

ON the afternoon of April 9 [1940] the Second Destroyer Flotilla, consisting of H.M. destroyers *Hardy*, *Hotspur*, *Hostile*, *Havock*, and *Hunter*, were between the south-west end of the Lofoten Islands and the mainland of Norway. The sea between the Lofoten Islands and the Norwegian coast is called West Fjord. It is nearly sixty miles long. Wide at the entrance, it narrows to a channel less than two miles wide. West Fjord leads into Ofot Fjord, towards the head of which lies Narvik, with the small but deep Rombaks Fjord beyond the harbour.

From West Fjord to Ofot Fjord ships have to pass through a channel nearly fifteen miles long and less than two miles wide, with high land on both sides. It is an approach which is easy enough in daylight with good visibility, but a passage not likely to be undertaken at night in a heavy snowstorm with strong enemy forces in the vicinity.

At 4 P.M. on April 9 *Hardy*, the flotilla leader (Captain Warburton-Lee), approached Tranoy, a Norwegian pilot station near the head of West Fjord, and landed two officers to seek information. Thus it was learned that Narvik was strongly held by the Germans and that there were in Ofot Fjord at least six German destroyers larger and more powerful than *Hardy* and her consorts. This intelligence was communicated to the Admiralty.

The Admiralty thought an attack on Narvik by the Second Destroyer Flotilla in face of these strong German forces so hazardous that at 1 A.M. on April 10 Captain Warburton-Lee was told that he must be the sole judge of whether to attack or not, and that the Admiralty would support him whatever happened. Captain

Warburton-Lee replied that he intended to attack at dawn high-water.

At 3 A.M. on April 10 H.M. destroyers *Hardy*, *Hotspur*, *Hostile*, *Havock*, and *Hunter* ceased their patrol in West Fjord and proceeded into the narrow channel leading into Ofot Fjord. There was a slight east wind. It was misty and snowing heavily. Visibility was so low that fog-lamps had to be used to enable the ships to keep in touch with one another. H.M.S. *Hardy* led the flotilla. The narrative of one of her officers states: "We never saw either side of the fjord at all, except early, when we nearly hit it once."

The passage was, however, successfully accomplished, and about 4.30 A.M. the flotilla was off Narvik. With the other destroyers patrolling outside, *Hardy* entered Narvik harbour alone. At first nothing but a merchant ship near the entrance could be seen. When *Hardy* had passed the ship, however, a mass of other shipping came into view, including a large German destroyer. *Hardy* at once turned to port and fired torpedoes, at the same time increasing speed to 20 knots.

As *Hardy* was swinging under helm two more large German destroyers came into view. Torpedoes were fired at them and *Hardy* opened fire with her guns. At that moment there was a loud explosion and a sheet of red flame from the first German destroyer, and thousands of rounds of tracer ammunition began to go off in the air, looking like bright stars. One of *Hardy's* torpedoes had found its mark and one of the enemy ships had been accounted for.

Hotly engaged by two German ships of superior gun-power, and also by guns mounted ashore, and having fired her torpedoes, *Hardy* withdrew, and the other British destroyers went into the attack. Their torpedoes made havoc among the German supply-ships and transports, and the German destroyers were hit by gun-fire.



Then *Hardy* attacked again. She was at once heavily engaged by the shore batteries and the heavier guns of the two remaining German destroyers in the harbour. Again *Hardy* withdrew, and the other British destroyers attacked in turn, hammering at the German destroyers and batteries, which quickly ceased fire, so that it was thought that all opposition had been broken. This time, as *Hardy* withdrew, six torpedoes passed close to her.

*Hardy* led a third attack, but, as she withdrew from this, she sighted three large German destroyers steaming towards her from the direction of Rombaks Fjord. The signal to withdraw was made, and speed was increased to 30 knots. At the same time *Hardy* opened fire on the leading German ships which were firing at her.

As *Hardy*, leading the flotilla, turned down the fjord, two more large German destroyers were sighted ahead. Action was at once joined. *Hardy* was hit almost immediately by the heavier shells of the German ships. The German destroyers of the Roeder class mount 5-inch guns as against the five 4.7-inch guns of *Hardy* and the four 4.7-inch guns of the other British destroyers engaged.

*Hardy's* bridge was hit and reduced to a shambles. Captain Warburton-Lee was mortally wounded. The only man on the bridge who was not killed or rendered unconscious was the captain's secretary, Paymaster Lieutenant Stanning, and his left foot was useless. Aft, the First Lieutenant, Lieutenant-Commander Mansell, was keeping the remaining guns in action.

Realizing that the ship was still steaming fast and without anybody at the helm, Paymaster Lieutenant Stanning dragged himself to the wheel-house. It was a shambles and there was nobody alive, so Paymaster Lieutenant Stanning took the wheel himself and steered the ship, looking through a shell-hole.

Soon afterwards an able seaman appeared. Pay-

master Lieutenant Stanning turned the wheel over to him and made his way back to the bridge, where he took charge of the ship. He had no idea of what was happening aft, but he has reported that he had a vague idea of ramming the enemy, who were now abreast of *Hardy* and firing almost point blank. At that moment, however, a shell struck *Hardy* in the engine-room. Steam escaped and the vessel at once began to lose way. Paymaster Lieutenant Stanning then put the helm over to beach the ship in order to save life. By the time *Hardy* grounded she was practically stopped. One gun was still in action and the ship was under heavy fire at short range.

Meanwhile *Hunter* had been sunk, and *Hotspur* and *Hostile* had suffered damage. The Germans, however, were by no means unscathed. In addition to six supply-ships sunk in Narvik harbour and the German destroyer torpedoed by *Hardy*, three of the other German destroyers had been heavily hit and were seriously on fire. The enemy made no attempt to pursue the remaining British destroyers, and these sank the German ammunition ship *Ravensfeld* on their way down the fjord.

The ship's company of *Hardy*, under the command of Lieutenant-Commander Mansell, were endeavouring to abandon ship under fire. This was no easy matter, as the only remaining boat proved unseaworthy, and there were many badly wounded. The German destroyers, however, soon drew off. Captain Warburton-Lee was lashed in a stretcher and lowered into the water. He was towed ashore by Mr McCracken, the gunner, and one rating, but he was dead when they reached the shore.

There were several wooden houses about half a mile from the shore, and the survivors distributed themselves among these for warmth and shelter. The majority went to the house of a Mrs Christiansen, where about eighty men huddled together trying to restore



their circulation. Mrs Christiansen and her daughter distributed food and all the clothes they had. Surgeon Lieutenant Waind, himself wounded, did what he could for the wounded, the bearing of whom was very courageous. Particularly was this so in the case of Able-seaman Bailey, who, half frozen with cold and with one hand shot off, sat for an hour and a half and never once murmured.

The first consideration was to get help for the wounded. A Norwegian succeeded in getting an ambulance from Ballanger, a small town fifteen miles away on the south side of Ofot Fjord, which took some of the wounded. Others were lashed to a sledge and dragged into Ballanger. For the greater part of the way the road was nothing but a rutted track full of holes. It must have caused great pain to the wounded, but they bore their sufferings with the greatest fortitude. Able-seaman Clark was particularly courageous. Chief Stoker Styles, who had been very seriously wounded and had been brought ashore by Lieutenant-Commander Mansell and Stoker Petty Officer Carey, died of his injuries and was buried under the snow.

On their way to Ballanger the *Hardy's* survivors fell in with British merchant seamen from the *North Cornwall*. This ship had been captured by the Germans the day before and the crew made prisoners on board the German supply-ship in Narvik harbour, but they had been released during the action, when the supply-ship, among others, was sunk.

At Ballanger the British survivors made contact with the Norwegians, reorganized and consolidated. They were taken off by *Ivanhoe* on April 13, after *Warspite* and other British naval forces had accounted for the whole of the German naval forces in Narvik and Rombaks Fjord.

*The Times*

# SOME GALLANT RESCUES

## THE RESCUE OF TOM FAGGUS

John Ridd, who is telling the story, has gone in search of his brother-in-law, Tom Faggus, who had joined in Monmouth's rebellion against King James II. Tom Faggus (formerly a highwayman) has a wonderful horse, Winnie.

**I**T was an awful thing, I say (and to this day I remember it), to hear the sounds of raging fight, and the yells of raving slayers, and the howls of poor men stricken hard, and shattered from wrath to wailing; then suddenly the dead low hush, as of a soul departing, and spirits kneeling over it. Through the vapour of the earth, and white breath of the water, and beneath the pale round moon (bowing as the drift went by), all this rush and pause of fear passed, or lingered, on my path.

At last, when I almost despaired of escaping from this tangle of spongy banks, and of hazy creeks, and reed-fringe, my horse heard the neigh of a fellow-horse, and was only too glad to answer it; upon which the other, having lost his rider, came up, and pricked his ears at us, and gazed through the fog very steadfastly. Therefore I encouraged him with a soft and genial whistle, and Kickums did his best to tempt him with a sort of inquiry. However, nothing would suit that nag, except to enjoy his new freedom; and he capered away with his tail set on high, and the stirrup-irons clashing under him. Therefore, as he might know the way, and appeared to have been in the battle, we followed him very carefully; and he led us to a little hamlet, called (as I found afterwards) West Zuyland, or Zealand, so named perhaps from its situation amid this inland sea.

Here the King's troops had been quite lately, and their fires were still burning; but the men themselves



had been summoned away by the night attack of the rebels. Hence I procured for my guide a young man who led me by many intricate ways to the rear of the rebel army. We came upon a broad open moor, striped with sullen water-courses, shagged with sedge, and yellow iris, and in the drier part with bilberries. For by this time it was four o'clock, and the summer sun, arising wanly, showed us all the ghastly scene.

Would that I had never been there! Often in the lonely hours, even now it haunts me; would, far more, that the piteous thing had never been done in England! Flying men, flung back from dreams of victory and honour, only glad to have the luck of life and limbs to fly with, mud-bedraggled, foul with slime, reeking both with sweat and blood, which they could not stop to wipe, cursing, with their pumped-out lungs, every stick that hindered them, or gory puddle that slipped the step, scarcely able to leap over the corpses that had dragged to die. And to see how the corpses lay; some, as fair as death in sleep; with the smile of placid valour, and of noble manhood, hovering yet on the silent lips. These had bloodless hands put upwards, white as wax, and firm as death, clasped (as on a monument) in prayer for dear ones left behind, or in high thanksgiving. And of these men there was nothing in their broad blue eyes to fear. But others were of different sort; simple fellows unused to pain, accustomed to the bill-hook, perhaps, or rasp of the knuckles in a quick-set hedge, or making some to-do, at breakfast, over a thumb cut in sharpening a scythe, and expecting their wives to make more to-do. Yet here lay these poor chaps, dead; dead, after a deal of pain, with little mind to bear it, and a soul they had never thought of; gone, their God alone knows whither; but to mercy we may trust. Upon these things I cannot dwell; and none, I trow, would ask me; only if a plain man saw what I saw that morning, he (if God had

blessed him with the heart that is in most of us) must have sickened of all desire to be great among mankind.

Seeing me ride to the front (where the work of death went on, among the men of true English pluck; which, when moved, no further moves), the fugitives called out to me, in half a dozen dialects, to make no utter fool of myself; for the great guns were come, and the fight was over; all the rest was slaughter.

"Arl oop wi Moonmo'," shouted one big fellow, a miner of the Mendip hills, whose weapon was a pick-axe; "na oose to vaight na moor. Wend thee hame, young mon, agin."

Upon this I stopped my horse, desiring not to be shot for nothing; and eager to aid some poor sick people, who tried to lift their arms to me. And this I did to the best of my power, though void of skill in the business; and more inclined to weep with them than to check their weeping. While I was giving a drop of cordial from my flask to one poor fellow, who sat up, while his life was ebbing, and with slow insistence urged me, when his broken voice would come, to tell his wife (whose name I knew not) something about an apple-tree, and a golden guinea stored in it, to divide among six children—in the midst of this, I felt warm lips laid against my cheek quite softly, and then a little push; and behold it was a horse leaning over me! I arose in haste, and there stood Winnie, looking at me with beseeching eyes, enough to melt a heart of stone. Then seeing my attention fixed, she turned her head, and glanced back sadly towards the place of battle, and gave a little wistful neigh; and then looked me full in the face again, as much as to say, "Do you understand?" while she scraped with one hoof impatiently. If ever a horse tried hard to speak, it was Winnie at that moment. I went to her side and patted; but that was not what she wanted. Then I offered to leap into the empty saddle;



but neither did that seem good to her: for she ran away toward the part of the field at which she had been glancing back, and then turned round and shook her mane, entreating me to follow her.

Upon this I learned from the dying man where to find his apple-tree, and promised to add another guinea to the one in store for his children; and so, commending him to God, I mounted my own horse again, and to Winnie's great delight professed myself at her service. With her ringing silvery neigh, such as no other horse of all I ever knew could equal, she at once proclaimed her triumph, and told her master (or meant to tell, if death should not have closed his ears) that she was coming to his aid, and bringing one who might be trusted, of the higher race that kill.

A cannon-bullet fired low, and ploughing the marsh slowly, met poor Winnie front to front; and she, being as quick as thought, lowered her nose to sniff at it. It might be a message from her master, for it made a mournful noise, but luckily for Winnie's life a rise of wet ground took the ball, even under her very nose; and there it cut a splashy groove, missing her off hind-foot by an inch, and scattering black mud over her. It frightened me much more than Winnie; of that I am quite certain: because, though I am firm enough when it comes to a real tussle, and the heart of a fellow warms up and tells him that he must go through with it; yet I never did approve of making a cold pie of death.

Therefore with those wretched cannons, brazen-mouthed and bellowing, two furlongs off, or it might be more (and the more the merrier), I would have given that year's hay-crop for a bit of a hill, or a thicket of oaks, or almost even a badger's earth. People will call me a coward for this (especially when I had made up my mind that life was not worth having without any sign of Lorna); nevertheless I cannot help it: those

were my feelings; and I set them down because they made a mark on me. At Glen Doone I had fought, even against cannon, with some spirit and fury: but now I saw nothing to fight about; but rather in every poor doubled corpse a good reason for not fighting. So, in cold blood riding on, and yet ashamed that a man should shrink where a horse went bravely, I cast a bitter blame upon the reckless ways of Winnie.

Nearly all were scattered now. Of the noble countrymen (armed with scythe, or pickaxe, blacksmith's hammer, or fold-pitcher), who had stood their ground for hours against blazing musketry, from men whom they could not get at, by reason of the water-dyke, and then against the deadly cannon, of these sturdy Englishmen, noble in their want of sense, scarce one out of four remained for the cowards to shoot down.

"Cross the rhaine," they shouted out, "cross the rhaine, and coom within rache": but the other mongrel Britons, with a mongrel at their head, found it pleasanter to shoot men who could not shoot in answer, than to meet the chance of mischief from strong arms and stronger hearts.

The last scene of this piteous play was acting, just as I rode up. Broad daylight, and upstanding sun, winnowing fog from the eastern hills, and spreading the moors with freshness; all along the dykes they shone, glistened on the willow-trunks, and touched the banks with a hoary grey. But alas! those banks were touched more deeply with a gory red, and strewn with fallen trunks, more woeful than the wreck of trees; while howling, cursing, yelling, and the loathsome reek of carnage, drowned the scent of new-mown hay, and the carol of the lark.

Then the cavalry of the King, with their horses at full speed, dashed from either side upon the helpless mob of countrymen. A few pikes feebly levelled met



them; but they shot the pikemen, drew swords, and helter-skelter leaped into the shattered and scattering mass. Right and left they hacked and hewed; I could hear the snapping of scythes beneath them, and see the flash of their sweeping swords. How it must end was plain enough, even to one like myself, who had never beheld such a battle before. But Winnie led me away to the left; and as I could not help the people, neither stop the slaughter, but found the cannon-bullets coming very rudely nigh me, I was only too glad to follow her.

That faithful creature, whom I began to admire as if she were my own (which is no little thing for a man to say of another man's horse) stopped in front of a low black shed, such as we call a "linhay." And here she uttered a little greeting in a subdued and softened voice, hoping to obtain an answer such as her master was wont to give in a cheery manner. Receiving no reply, she entered; and I (who could scarce keep up with her, poor Kickums being weary) leaped from his back, and followed. There I found her sniffing gently, but with great emotion, at the body of Tom Faggus. A corpse poor Tom appeared to be, if ever there was one in this world; and I turned away, and felt unable to keep altogether from weeping. But the mare either could not understand, or else would not believe it. She reached her long neck forth, and felt him with her under lip, passing it over his skin as softly as a mother would do to an infant; and then she looked up at me again, as much as to say, "He is all right."

Upon this I took courage, and handled poor Tom, which being very young I had feared at first to do. He groaned very feebly as I raised him up; and there was the wound, a great savage one (whether from pike-thrust or musket-ball), gaping and welling in his right side, from which a piece seemed to be torn away.

I bound it up with some of my linen, so far as I knew

how; just to staunch the flow of blood until we could get a doctor. Then I gave him a little weak brandy and water, which he drank with the greatest eagerness, and made sign to me for more of it. But not knowing how far it was right to give cordial under the circumstances, I handed him unmixed water that time, thinking that he was too far gone to perceive the difference. But herein I wronged Tom Faggus; for he shook his head and frowned at me. Even at the door of death he would not drink what Adam drank. So I gave him a little more *cau-de-vie*, and he took it most submissively.

After that he seemed better, and a little colour came into his cheeks; and he looked at Winnie and knew her, and would have her nose in his clammy hand, though I thought it not good for either of them. With the stay of my arm he sat upright, and faintly looked about him; as if at the end of a violent dream, too much for his power of mind. Then he managed to whisper, "Is Winnie hurt?"

"As sound as a roach," I answered.

"Then so am I," said he: "put me upon her back, John; she and I die together."

Surprised as I was at this fatalism (for so it appeared to me), of which he had often shown symptoms before (but I took them for mere levity), now I knew not what to do; for it seemed to me a murderous thing to set such a man on horseback; where he must surely bleed to death, even if he could keep the saddle. But he told me, with many breaks and pauses, that unless I obeyed his orders he would tear off all my bandages, and accept no further aid from me.

While I was yet hesitating, a storm of horse at full gallop went by, tearing, swearing, bearing away all the country before them. Only a little pollard hedge kept us from their blood-shot eyes. "Now is the time," said my cousin Tom, so far as I could make out his words;



"on their heels I am safe, John, if only I have Winnie under me. Winnie and I die together."

Seeing this strong bent of his mind, stronger than any pains of death, I even did what his feeble eyes sometimes implored, and sometimes commanded. With a strong sash from his own hot neck, bound and twisted, tight as wax, around his damaged waist, I set him upon Winnie's back, and placed his trembling feet in stirrups, with a band from one to other, under the good mare's body; so that no swerve could throw him out: and then I said, "Lean forward, Tom; it will stop your hurt from bleeding." He leaned almost on the neck of his mare, which, as I knew, must close the wound; and the light of his eyes was quite different, and the pain of his forehead unstrung itself, as he felt the undulous readiness of her volatile paces under him.

"God bless you, John; I am safe," he whispered, fearing to open his lungs much: "who can come near my Winnie mare? A mile of her gallop is ten years of life. Look out for yourself, John Ridd." He sucked his lips, and the mare went off, as easy and swift as a swallow.

"Well," thought I, as I looked at Kickums, ignobly cropping a bit of grass, "I have done a very good thing, no doubt, and ought to be thankful to God for the chance. But as for getting away unharmed, with all these scoundrels about me, and only a foundered horse to trust in—good and spiteful as he is—upon the whole, I begin to think that I have made a fool of myself, according to my habit. No wonder Tom said, 'Look out for yourself!' I shall look out from a prison window, or perhaps even out of a halter. And then, what will Lorna think of me?"

Being in this wistful mood, I resolved to abide awhile, even where fate had thrown me; for my horse required good rest, no doubt, and was taking it even while he cropped, with his hind legs far away stretched out, and

his fore legs gathered under him, and his muzzle on the mole-hills; so that he had five supportings from his mother earth. Moreover the linhay itself was full of very ancient cow-dung; than which there is no balmier and more maiden soporific. Hence I resolved, upon the whole, though grieving about breakfast, to light a pipe, and go to sleep; or at least until the hot sun would arouse the flies.

I may have slept three hours, or four, or it might be even five—for I never count time, while sleeping—when a shaking, more rude than the old landlady's, brought me back to the world again. I looked up with a mighty yawn; and saw twenty, or so, of foot-soldiers.

"This linhay is not yours," I said, when they had quite aroused me, with tongue, and hand, and even sword-prick: "what business have you here, good fellows?"

"Business bad for you," said one, "and will lead you to the gallows."

"Do you wish to know the way out again?" I asked, very quietly, as being no braggadocio.

"We will show thee the way out," said one, "and the way out of the world," said another. "But not the way to heaven," said one chap, most unlikely to know it: and thereupon they all fell wagging, like a bed of clover leaves in the morning, at their own choice humour.

"Will you pile your arms outside," I said, "and try a bit of fair play with me?"

For I disliked these men sincerely, and was fain to teach them a lesson; they were so unchristian in appearance, having faces of a coffee colour, and dirty beards half over them. Moreover their dress was outrageous, and their address still worse. However I had wiser let them alone, as will appear afterwards. These savage-looking fellows laughed at the idea of my having any chance against some twenty of them: but I knew that



the place was in my favour; for my part of it had been fenced off (for weaning a calf most likely), so that only two could come at me at once; and I must be very much out of training, if I could not manage two of them. Therefore I laid aside my carbine, and the two horse-pistols; and they with many coarse jokes at me went a little way outside, and set their weapons against the wall, and turned up their coat-sleeves jauntily; and then began to hesitate.

"Go you first, Bob," I heard them say; "you are the biggest man of us; and Dick the wrestler along of you. Us will back you up, boy."

"I'll warrant I'll draw the badger," said Bob; "and not a tooth will I leave him. But mind, for the honour of Kirke's lambs, every man stands me a glass of gin." Then he, and another man, made a rush, and the others came double-quick-march on their heels. But as Bob ran at me most stupidly, not even knowing how to place his hands, I caught him with my knuckles at the back of his neck, and with all the sway of my right arm sent him over the heads of his comrades. Meanwhile Dick the wrestler had grappled me, expecting to show off his art, of which indeed he had some small knowledge; but being quite of the light weights, in a second he was flying after his companion Bob.

Now these two men were hurt so badly, the light one having knocked his head against the lintel of the outer gate, that the rest had no desire to encounter like misfortune. So they hung back whispering; and before they had made up their minds, I rushed into the midst of them. The suddenness and the weight of my onset took them wholly by surprise; and for once in their lives, perhaps, Kirke's lambs were worthy of their name. Like a flock of sheep at a dog's attack, they fell away, hustling one another, and my only difficulty was not to tumble over them.

I had taken my carbine out with me, having a fondness for it; but the two horse-pistols I left behind; and therefore felt good title to take two from the magazine of the lambs. And with these, and my carbine, I leaped upon Kickums, who was now quite glad of a gallop again; and I bade adieu to that mongrel lot; yet they had the meanness to shoot at me. Thanking God for my deliverance (inasmuch as those men would have strung me up, from a pollard ash without trial, as I heard them tell one another, and saw the tree they had settled upon), I ventured to go rather fast on my way, with doubt and uneasiness urging me. And now my way was home again. Nobody could say but what I had done my duty, and rescued Tom (if he could be rescued) from the mischief into which his own perverseness and love of change had led him.

R. D. BLACKMORE, *Lorna Doone*



## SAVED FROM A BLAZING MILL

The novel from which the following extract is taken is a tale of life in Manchester during the mid-nineteenth century. A mill in the industrial part of the town has caught fire, and two girls, Margaret and Mary, have just joined the crowd which is watching the scene.

CARSONS' mill ran lengthways from east to west. Along it went one of the oldest thoroughfares in Manchester. Indeed, all that part of the town was comparatively old; it was there that the first cotton mills were built, and the crowded alleys and back streets of the neighbourhood made a fire there particularly to be dreaded. The staircase of the mill ascended from the entrance at the western end, which faced into a wide, dingy-looking street, consisting principally of public-houses, pawnbrokers' shops, rag and bone warehouses, and dirty provision shops. The other, the east end of the factory, fronted into a very narrow back street, not twenty feet wide, and miserably lighted and paved. Right against this end of the factory were the gable ends of the last house in the principal street—a house which from its size, its handsome stone facings, and the attempt at ornament in the front, had probably been once a gentleman's house; but now the light which streamed from its enlarged front windows made clear the interior of the splendidly fitted-up room, with its painted walls, its pillared recesses, its gilded and gorgeous fittings-up, its miserable, squalid inmates. It was a gin palace. . . .

"There never is anyone in the mill, surely!" exclaimed Mary, as the sea of upward-turned faces moved with one accord to the eastern end, looking into Dunham Street, the narrow back lane already mentioned.

The western end of the mill, whither the raging flames were driven by the wind, was crowned and turreted with triumphant fire. It sent forth its infernal tongues from every window hole, licking the black walls with amorous fierceness; it was swayed or fell before the mighty gale, only to rise higher and yet higher, to ravage and roar yet more wildly. This part of the roof fell in with an astounding crash, while the crowd struggled more and more to press into Dunham Street, for what were magnificent, terrible flames—what were falling timbers or tottering walls, in comparison with human life?

There, where the devouring flames had been repelled by the yet more powerful wind, but where yet black smoke gushed out from every aperture—there, at one of the windows on the fourth storey, or rather a doorway where a crane was fixed to hoist up goods, might occasionally be seen, when the thick gusts of smoke cleared partially away for an instant, the imploring figures of two men. They had remained after the rest of the workmen for some reason or other, and, owing to the wind having driven the fire in the opposite direction, had perceived no sight or sound of alarm, till long after (if anything could be called long in that throng of terrors which passed by in less than half an hour) the fire had consumed the old wooden staircase at the other end of the building. I am not sure whether it was not the first sound of the rushing crowd below that made them fully aware of their awful position.

“Where are the engines?” asked Margaret of her neighbour.

“They’re coming, no doubt; but bless you, I think it’s but bare ten minutes since we first found out th’ fire; it rages so wi’ this wind, and all so dry-like.”

“Is no one gone for a ladder?” gasped Mary, as the men were perceptibly, though not audibly, praying the great multitude below for help.



"Ay, Wilson's son and another man were off like a shot, well-nigh five minutes ago. But th' masons, and slaters, and such like, have left their work, and locked up the yards."

Wilson, then, was that man whose figure loomed out against the ever-increasing dull hot light behind, whenever the smoke was clear—was that George Wilson? Mary sickened with terror. She knew that he worked for Carsons; but at first she had no idea that any lives were in danger; and since she had become aware of this, the heated air, the roaring flames, the dizzy light, and the agitated and murmuring crowd had bewildered her thoughts.

"Oh! let us go home, Margaret; I cannot stay."

"We cannot go! See how we are wedged in by folks. Poor Mary! ye won't hanker after a fire again. Hark! listen!"

For through the hushed crowd pressing round the angle of the mill, and filling up Dunham Street, might be heard the rattle of the engine, the heavy, quick tread of loaded horses.

"Thank God!" said Margaret's neighbour, "the engine's come."

Then there was a pressure through the crowd, the front rows bearing back on those behind, till the girls were sick with the close ramming confinement. Then a relaxation, and a breathing freely once more.

"'Twas young Wilson and a fireman wi' a ladder," said Margaret's neighbour, a tall man who could overlook the crowd.

"Oh, tell us what you see," begged Mary.

"They've gotten it fixed against the gin shop wall. One o' the men i' the factory has fell back; dazed wi' the smoke, I'll warrant. The floor's not given way there. God!" said he, bringing his eye lower down, "the ladder's too short. It's a' over-wi' them, poor chaps.

Th' fire's coming slow and sure to that end, and afore they've either gotten water, or another ladder, they'll be dead and out. Lord have mercy on them!"

A sob, as if of excited women, was heard in the hush of the crowd. Another pressure like the former! Mary clung to Margaret's arm with a pinching grasp, and longed to faint, and be insensible, to escape from the oppressing misery of her sensations. A minute or two.

"They've taken th' ladder into th' Temple of Apollor. Can't press back with it to the yard it came from."

A mighty shout arose; a sound to wake the dead. Up on high, quivering in the air, was seen the end of the ladder, protruding out of a garret window, in the gable end of the gin palace, nearly opposite to the doorway where the men had been seen. Those in the crowd nearest to the factory, and consequently best able to see up to the garret window, said that several men were holding up one end, and guiding by their weight its passage to the doorway. The garret window-frame had been taken out before the crowd below were aware of the attempt.

At length—for it seemed long, measured by beating hearts, though scarce two minutes had elapsed—the ladder was fixed, an aerial bridge at a dizzy height, across the narrow street.

Every eye was fixed in unwinking anxiety, and people's very breathing seemed stilled in suspense. The men were nowhere to be seen, but the wind appeared, for the moment, higher than ever, and drove back the invading flames to the other end.

Mary and Margaret could see now: right above them danced the ladder in the wind. The crowd pressed back from under; firemen's helmets appeared at the window, holding the ladder firm, when a man, with quick, steady tread, and unmoving head, passed from one side to the other. The multitude did not even whisper while



he crossed the perilous bridge, which quivered under him; but when he was across, comparatively safe in the factory, a cheer arose for an instant, checked, however, almost immediately, by the uncertainty of the result, and the desire not in any way to shake the nerves of the brave fellow who had cast his life on such a die.

"There he is again!" sprang to the lips of many, as they saw him at the doorway, standing as if for an instant to breathe a mouthful of the fresher air, before he trusted himself to cross. On his shoulders he bore an insensible body. "It's Jem Wilson and his father," whispered Margaret, but Mary knew it before.

The people were sick with anxious terror. He could no longer balance himself with his arms; everything must depend on nerve and eye. They saw the latter was fixed, by the position of the head, which never wavered; the ladder shook under the double weight; but still he never moved his head—he dared not look below. It seemed an age before the crossing was accomplished. At last the window was gained; the bearer was relieved from his burden; both had disappeared.

Then the multitude might shout; and above the roaring flames, louder than the blowing of the mighty wind, arose that tremendous burst of applause at the success of the daring enterprise. Then a shrill cry was heard, asking:

"Is the oud man alive, and likely to do?"

"Ay," answered one of the firemen to the hushed crowd below. "He's coming round finely, now he's had a dash of cowd water."

He drew back his head; and the eager inquiries, the shouts, the sea-like murmurs of the moving, rolling mass began again to be heard—but only for an instant. In far less time than even that in which I have endeavoured briefly to describe the pause of events, the same bold hero stepped again upon the ladder, with evident

purpose to rescue the man yet remaining in the burning mill.

He went across in the same quick, steady manner as before, and the people below, made less acutely anxious by his previous success, were talking to each other, shouting out intelligence of the progress of the fire at the other end of the factory, telling of the endeavours of the firemen at that part to obtain water, while the closely packed body of men heaved and rolled from side to side. It was different from the former silent, breathless hush. I do not know if it were from this cause, or from the recollection of peril past, or that he looked below, in the breathing moment before returning with the remaining person (a slight little man) slung across his shoulders, but Jem Wilson's step was less steady, his tread more uncertain; he seemed to feel with his foot for the next round of the ladder, to waver, and finally to stop half-way. By this time the crowd was still enough; in the awful instant that intervened no one durst speak, even to encourage. Many turned sick with terror, and shut their eyes to avoid seeing the catastrophe they dreaded.

It came. The brave man swayed from side to side, at first as slightly as if only balancing himself; but he was evidently losing nerve, and even sense; it was only wonderful how the animal instinct of self-preservation did not overcome every generous feeling, and impel him at once to drop the helpless, inanimate body he carried; perhaps the same instinct told him that the sudden loss of so heavy a weight would of itself be a great and imminent danger.

All eyes were directed upward. At this point of time a rope, with a running noose, was dexterously thrown by one of the firemen, after the manner of a lasso, over the head and round the bodies of the two men. True, it was with rude and slight adjustment: but slight as it



was, it served as a steadying guide; it encouraged the sinking heart, the dizzy head.

Once more Jem stepped onwards. He was not hurried by any jerk or pull. Slowly and gradually the rope was hauled in, slowly and gradually did he make the four or five paces between him and safety. The window was gained, and all were saved.

The multitude in the street absolutely danced with triumph, and huzzaed, and yelled till you would have fancied their very throats would crack; and then, with all the fickleness of interest characteristic of a large body of people, pressed and stumbled, and cursed and swore, in the hurry to get out of Dunham Street, and back to the immediate scene of the fire, the mighty diapason of whose roaring flames formed an awful accompaniment to the screams, yells, and imprecations of the struggling crowd.

E. C. GASKELL, *Mary Barton*  
(slightly abridged)

## RESCUED FROM A WHALE'S HEAD

The process of removing oil from the head of the whale, as described by Herman Melville in his famous whaling story *Moby Dick*, is no easy task. The oil is drawn out by buckets from the whale's head, which is fastened, mouth upwards, alongside the ship. This operation led to the unusual rescue feat the story of which is related in the following extract. Tashtego and Queequeg are Red Indian harpooners, Daggoo a negro. The Heidelburgh Tun is that part of the head which contains the oil.

**I**T will have been seen that the Heidelburgh Tun of the Sperm Whale embraces the entire length of the entire top of the head; and since the head embraces one-third of the whole length of the creature, then setting that length down at eighty feet for a good-sized whale, you have more than twenty-six feet for the depth of the tun, which is lengthwise hoisted up and down against a ship's side. . . .

Nimble as a cat, Tashtego mounts aloft; and without altering his erect posture, runs straight out upon the overhanging mainyard-arm to the part where it exactly projects over the hoisted tun. He has carried with him a light tackle called a whip, consisting of only two parts, travelling through a single sheaved block. Securing this block, so that it hangs down from the yard-arm, he swings one end of the rope till it is caught and firmly held by a hand on deck. Then, hand over hand, down the other part, the Indian drops through the air, till dexterously he lands on the summit of the head. There—still high elevated above the rest of the company, to whom he vivaciously cries—he seems some Turkish Muezzin calling the good people to prayers from the top of a tower.

A short-handled sharp spade being sent up to him, he



diligently searches for the proper place to begin breaking into the tun. In this business he proceeds very heedfully, like a treasure-hunter in some old house sounding the walls to find where the gold is masoned in. By the time this cautious search is over, a stout iron-bound bucket, precisely like a well-bucket, has been attached to one end of the whip: while the other end, being stretched across the deck, is there held by two or three alert hands.

These last now hoist the bucket within grasp of the Indian, to whom another person has reached up a very long pole. Inserting this pole into the bucket Tashtego downward guides the bucket into the tun, till it entirely disappears; then giving the word to the seamen at the whip, up comes the bucket again, all bubbling like a dairymaid's pail of new milk. Carefully lowered from its height, the full-freighted vessel is caught by an appointed hand and quickly emptied into a large tub. Then re-mounting aloft, it again goes through the same round until the deep cistern will yield no more. Towards the end Tashtego has to ram his long pole harder and harder, and deeper and deeper into the tun, until some twenty feet of the pole have gone down.

Now the people of the Pequod had been baling some time in this way; several tubs had been filled with the fragrant sperm; when all at once a queer accident happened. Whether it was that Tashtego, that wild Indian, was so heedless and reckless as to let go for a moment his one-handed hold on the great cabled tackles suspending the head; or whether the place where he stood was so treacherous and oozy; or whether the Evil One himself would have it fall out so, without stating his particular reason; how it was exactly, there is no telling now; but, on a sudden, as the eightieth or ninetieth bucket came suckingly up—my God! poor Tashtego, like the twin reciprocating bucket in a

veritable well, dropped head foremost down into this great Tun of Heidelburgh, and with a horrible oily gurgling went clean out of sight.

"Man overboard!" cried Daggoo, who amid the general consternation first came to his senses. "Swing the bucket this way!" and putting one foot into it, so as the better to secure his slippery hand-hold on the whip itself, the hoisters ran him high up to the top of the head, almost before Tashtego could have reached the interior bottom. Meanwhile there was a terrible tumult. Looking over the side, they saw the lifeless head throbbing and heaving just below the surface of the sea, as if that moment seized with some momentous idea; whereas it was only the poor Indian unconsciously revealing by those struggles the perilous depth to which he had sunk.

At this instant, while Daggoo, on the summit of the head, was clearing the whip—which had somehow got foul of the great cutting tackles—a sharp cracking noise was heard; and to the unspeakable horror of all, one of the two enormous hooks suspending the head tore out, and with a vast vibration the enormous mass sideways swung, till the drunk ship reeled and shook as if smitten by an iceberg. The one remaining hook, upon which the entire strain now depended, seemed every instant to be on the point of giving way; an event still more likely from the violent motions of the head.

"Come down, come down!" yelled the seamen to Daggoo; but with one hand holding on to the heavy tackles, so that if the head should drop he would still remain suspended, the negro, having cleared the foul line, rammed down the bucket into the now collapsed well, meaning that the buried harpooneer should grasp it, and so be hoisted out.

"In heaven's name, man," cried Stubb, "are you ramming home a cartridge there?—Avast! How will



that help him; jamming that iron-bound bucket on top of his head? Avast, will ye!"

"Stand clear of the tackle!" cried a voice like the bursting of a rocket.

Almost at the same instant, with a thunder-boom, the enormous mass dropped into the sea, like Niagara's Table Rock into the whirlpool; the suddenly relieved hull rolled away from it, to far down her glittering copper; and all caught their breath, as half-swinging—now over the sailors' heads and now over the water—Daggoo, through a thick mist of spray, was dimly beheld clinging to the pendulous tackles, while poor, buried-alive Tashtego was sinking utterly down to the bottom of the sea!

But hardly had the blinding vapour cleared away when a naked figure with a boarding-sword in its hand was for one swift moment seen hovering over the bulwarks. The next, a loud splash announced that my brave Queequeg had dived to the rescue. One packed rush was made to the side, and every eye counted every ripple, as moment followed moment, and no sign of either the sinker or the diver could be seen. Some hands now jumped into a boat alongside, and pushed a little off from the ship.

"Ha! ha!" cried Daggoo all at once, from his now quiet, swinging perch overhead; and looking farther off from the side we saw an arm thrust upright from the blue waves; a sight strange to see, as an arm thrust forth from the grass over a grave.

"Both! both!—it is both!" cried Daggoo again with a joyful shout; and soon after, Queequeg was seen boldly striking out with one hand, and with the other clutching the long hair of the Indian. Drawn into the waiting boat, they were quickly brought to the deck; but Tashtego was long in coming to, and Queequeg did not look very brisk.

Now, how had this noble rescue been accomplished? Why, diving after the slowly descending head, Queequeg with his keen sword had made side lunges near the bottom, so as to scuttle a large hole there; then, dropping his sword, had thrust his long arm inwards and upwards, and so hauled out poor Tash by the head. He averred that upon first thrusting in for him a leg was presented; but well knowing that that was not as it ought to be, and might occasion great trouble, he had thrust back the leg, and by a dexterous heave and toss had wrought a somerset upon the Indian; so that with the next trial he came forth in the good old way—head foremost. As for the great head itself, that was doing as well as could be expected.

And thus, through the courage and great skill of Queequeg, the deliverance, or rather delivery, of Tashtego was successfully accomplished, in the teeth, too, of the most untoward and apparently hopeless impediments; which is a lesson by no means to be forgotten.

HERMAN MELVILLE, *Moby Dick*



## THE MOOSE RIVER RESCUE

ON Monday, April 13, 1936, three men were exploring the depths of a gold-mine at Moose River, Nova Scotia. They were Dr Robertson, a well-known physician, his friend Mr Magill, and the mine manager, Mr Scadding. The mine was an old one which had been reopened recently. It was in bad condition, but not believed to be dangerous. They were in a level—that is, a horizontal gallery—150 feet below the surface when they heard an ominous cracking. At once all three hurried towards the ‘skip,’ or cage, which travels up and down the shaft. Scadding pulled the signal cord, and almost as he did so there followed an appalling roar, and an avalanche of rock came crashing down the shaft, corking it as closely as a bottle.

The air was full of dust, but the miners’ lamps which the men carried were not extinguished, and by their light the three men dashed into the western gallery, only to find it full of fallen rock. They turned and reached the cross-cut to the east of the shaft, whence they entered a blind end cut into solid rock. Here they stayed while for many minutes the floor beneath them quivered from the continued fall of rock, and the noise was deafening. At last the crashing ceased, and all was still except for an ominous sound of running water. The great fall had released springs and underground water in every direction. In many places water was pouring or dripping from the roof and collecting in streams which fell in a solid spout into the depths of the shaft.

As soon as was possible the three set out with the hope of finding a way to an upper level. They were aware

that they could not get out without help, for the shaft was completely blocked; but they meant to get as near as possible to the surface so as to make rescue work easier. They found an incline leading to a higher level, and were crawling up it when Alfred Scadding shouted a warning, and they slid back just in time to save themselves from being crushed by a new fall. There was nothing for it but to return to the 150-foot level.

This was apparently safe from collapse, but was about as uncomfortable a refuge as could well be conceived. The floor was covered with mud, and water was leaking through the roof like a rainstorm. This tunnel prison was about 100 yards long, 8 feet high, and 10 feet wide. They hunted out the driest spot, collected such wood as they could find from fallen timbering, and lighted a fire. The warmth was more welcome than the smoke, which made them all feel ill. The fire had one effect on which none of them counted. Seeping upwards through crevices among the broken rocks, it reached the surface and gave those above the belief that the entombed ones were still alive. Soon Dr Robertson and his companions were cheered by the distant sounds of shot-firing and so became aware that their comrades above ground were doing all in their power to rescue them. They in their turn, in an effort to signal that they were alive and hoping for help, knocked upon a water-pipe which opened in the level where they were imprisoned.

Within a very few hours the whole world—that is, the world that reads newspapers or listens to wireless—became aware of the disaster, and the wave of sympathy which throbbed across the globe has hardly been matched since mining first began.

Rapidly miners were gathered and plans set afoot for rescue. The task, however, was a desperately difficult one, for the entire shaft was choked, and the new shaft



had to be driven not through solid rock but through wedged masses of broken stone. It was plain that this task must be a long one, so it was at once decided that, while the shaft was being cleared, a diamond drill should be used and a bore-hole driven through which food could be sent down to the unfortunate prisoners. Reaching the precise spot where the men were entombed presented a most difficult problem. The borers had nothing but the water-pipe above mentioned to guide them, and it was not known exactly where this emerged. The mine itself being old, there were galleries that had been long closed and forgotten. There was some delay in obtaining a drill, but once it was on the spot the men worked night and day and rapidly cut a three-inch hole.

There was no lack of help, for scores of miners from the neighbouring Caribou Mines had been rushed to the pit-head and had organized rescue crews. Each crew numbered forty, and it was decided to descend through a second shaft, a disused one, and cut a tunnel to the spot where the prisoners were believed to be sheltering. A twenty-eight-ton crane was brought to the spot. The roads were in terrible condition, and the men who guided this enormously heavy piece of mechanism through twenty miles of mire hardly slept for forty hours on end. When eight miles from the mine the steering gear broke, and fresh parts had to be rushed from Halifax. The successful journey of that crane was in itself one of the biggest feats accomplished during the whole of that strenuous ten days. It may be mentioned here that the rescue work was hampered all through by weather, for it was very cold, with the constant storms of slushy snow and sleet which usually mark the coming of spring in Nova Scotia.

In addition to driving a new gallery from the old shaft it was decided, as we have said, to drive a new

shaft, or, rather, to make an attempt to clear out a second shaft which had fallen in. This was a most perilous job, and very nearly led to fresh disaster, for on Wednesday, April 15, there was a bad cave in of rocks and earth, and the workers barely escaped with their lives. The first fall, which had entombed the three prospectors, was so severe that it had left a great hollow at the surface, more than two hundred feet in length, and the whole of the earth below was in a badly shaken state.

Because of this fresh cave in, the work had to be begun all over again, and a fresh shaft was started through solid rock which was intended to cut into the old shaft at a lower level. This meant driving through 140 feet of rock, and, in spite of the number of hands employed, it seemed very doubtful whether it could be finished in time to save the buried men. Large charges of dynamite were used, and the big crane, which was able to lift two tons of rock at a time, was kept busy.

Meanwhile Mrs Robertson arrived, and with her Mrs Magill. Dr Robertson was a man of fifty-two, but Magill was only thirty. It seems a strange thing that it was the elder man who survived to tell of this terrible ordeal, while poor Magill died in the depths. With Mrs Magill was her husband's pet, a Great Dane named Moose, and miners said that the dog seemed to have a foreknowledge of disaster, for during the day on which his master died he was constantly whining and sniffing at the crevices which the great fall had made in the surface.

When the shaft had reached the required depth a tunnel was begun at right angles to the perpendicular cut. This progressed steadily but slowly. A difficulty was to get sufficient posts for timbering the roof and sides. The ground through which it was driven was so rotten that every foot of roof had to be propped, and



every man working in it continued in peril of his life. Some one had the bright idea of using the old mine buildings to furnish props, and at once tractors were set to work which tore them to pieces. Wire ropes were fastened around the corner-posts, and with the aid of the tractors these were quickly dragged down, sawn to the proper lengths, and sent down the old shaft to be used in the tunnel.

The heroism of the men who worked in that tunnel can hardly be exaggerated. In order to save time the tunnel was made hardly larger than a badger's 'earth.' Actually it was only three feet in diameter. Consequently the air was very bad, while the men who did the excavating were constantly drenched with icy cold water and were lying or kneeling in a filthy paste of mud. Only two men could work at a time on the tunnel face, one digging, the other timbering. In other words, the advance depended on the speed of a single man, the one digging at the face. And it was reckoned that 1,200 cubic feet of rock had to be picked and prised out and passed from hand to hand along that line of kneeling, crawling men.

Progress was terribly slow. In the first eight hours they advanced twelve feet, but during the next nine hours only *three feet*. The reason was that no fewer than ten times the roof fell in before them. The men had to timber and timber again, most disheartening and back-breaking work. Yet not one of them showed a sign of quitting. The job, indeed, was to get them to come away and give place to their reliefs. These wiry, hard-bitten Nova Scotian miners seemed never to tire. They were not dressed like English or Welsh miners, not even like the Cornish Jack who delves in the Duchy tin-mines. They wore baggy trousers, rubber coats, and celluloid helmets with a strong light fixed on the peak. The helmets were to protect their heads from falling

stones, and truly they were needed. Not a man of all those who toiled in that low-roofed tunnel escaped bruises. One who watched them has said that they worked with the care and precision of jewellers. Always the best man was at the face, and he knew that one mistake might mean not only his own death but that of all the long chain of forty men crouching behind him, passing back from hand to hand each lump of rock which he extracted from the yard-square face in front of him.

One of them, Jack Simpson, was at the face almost continuously for two whole days and nights. When they made him come away he could hardly crawl, and was so coated with dirt he looked like nothing human. All of these men who worked in the tunnel came out coughing from the sour, dank air, for even air-pumps could only partially ventilate so crowded a burrow.

Mr Michael Dwyer, Minister of Mines for Nova Scotia, was on the spot soon after news of the disaster had reached him. In his early life he was a miner himself, and was still known as 'Mike' Dwyer. He was not content to sit at the top, directing. Wearing black oil-skins and an old corduroy cap, he went down into the danger zone and crawled to the very end of the tunnel, himself doing his share in passing out the rocks and stones from the face. All the time the timbers were grinding overhead and stones slipping. As Inspector Phillips said—he being below at the same time as Mr Dwyer—"If you start thinking down there you go mad with the threat above and around you. The men don't think, they work."

On Sunday, April 19, the diamond drill broke into the subterranean prison. It broke through at the very edge of the wall. A few inches to the left and it would have missed the chamber altogether; then all three must have died. A tiny telephone enclosed in a tube



hardly bigger than a fountain-pen was lowered, through which Dr Robertson spoke and told those above that he and Scadding were still fairly strong, but that Magill was in a very bad state. Actually the poor fellow died a few hours later. The doctor and Scadding had done all in their power to keep some warmth in his body by lying close on either side of him, but their care was of no avail. He died with a smile on his face, and the others, with a great effort—for they were very weak—lifted his body and carried it to the end of the gallery.

Quickly hot brandy and soup were lowered through the small tube which lined the hole made by the diamond drill, and these refreshments gave the two survivors fresh strength. Through the telephone Dr Robertson was able to tell the story of the events of the past six days and to give accurate information as to the part of the mine in which he and his companions were lying. He talked, too, with his wife. His pluck was wonderful. He even laughed. In spite of his being the oldest of the three entombed men, he was in much the best condition. Perhaps his medical training had helped, but all through the long and terrible ordeal he preserved his strength in a marvellous degree.

To his wife he was all cheerfulness, but when he spoke to the engineer in charge the news he gave was serious. The water, he said, was rising so fast in the shaft that he feared that within a comparatively short time it would invade the gallery and drown him and Alfred Scadding. He added that Scadding was very weak, and that they were both having trouble with their hands and feet, which were terribly numb. The serious part of this was that they might not be able again to reach the lower end of the pipe. It appeared that it was necessary to wade through a pool of water and climb a ladder in order to reach the pipe, and that this was now dangerous owing to the state of their hands and feet. Before

he and Scadding left the pipe they were able to receive a dozen candles. These were a great joy, for their lanterns had gone out for lack of oil and their stock of candles was exhausted.

The hearts of people all through the civilized world throbbed with relief when news was wirelessly that two of the prisoners were still alive. Prayers for their safety were offered that Sunday in churches all through Canada, while hour by hour the story went forth by wireless, and newspapers issued special editions. On that same Sunday evening the new shaft (or rather the old shaft which had been reopened) had reached a point within twenty feet of the gallery where the two brave men waited. The latter could hear the sound of the tools used by the workers, and hope ran high that by Monday evening they would be rescued.

Then came fresh disaster. The ground began to move again, and the miners had just time to escape before the whole shaft collapsed. The verdict was that it was not worth while starting upon it again and that the only hope of rescue was by the tunnel below.

On Monday Scadding spoke through the telephone urging haste. The water in the shaft was rising fast, and it was his belief that within ten hours it would overwhelm and drown them. There was little sleep in Toronto that night. The children in particular were praying for Dr Robertson, for, through the Hospital for Sick Children in that city, he had brought hundreds of little ones out of the shadow of death. Late at night came a broadcast to say that the men in the tunnel had struck a large mass of rock which had to be chiselled round and removed bodily. The *chug-chug* of the pumps and the hissing of the steam from the giant crane at the head of the shaft were heard through the ether all over the North American continent. Towards morning came another announcement. "Ten or



fifteen feet of fallen rock remains to be chiselled through, but we believe we can get them out. I have been down in the mine, and they are working and slaving and sweating, and I do believe they will get the men out alive."

Yet Monday, April 20, dragged by with still no news of the rescue. Scadding spoke through the 'phone and said that Dr Robertson was delirious from pneumonia and that he himself was suffering from trench feet. Actually this verdict on Dr Robertson was a delusion on the part of Scadding, but by this time both men were so weak that there is little wonder their senses played them tricks. The marvel is that they lived at all, soaked and half frozen in the mire of that horrible prison-house.

On Tuesday afternoon all the men but two in the tunnel collapsed from exhaustion. Every yard gained added to the difficulty and danger of the task, and now an appeal was made for experienced unmarried men ready to risk their lives. Needless to say, the appeal was hardly made before it was answered, and work went on with the same fierce determination as before.

When the new workers went down they found the two miners who had been left in the shaft lying on their stomachs, tearing with bleeding hands at rocks and earth. That was at four in the afternoon. Half an hour later Dr Robertson spoke by telephone, saying that he and Scadding had been asleep for two hours. "We are feeling much better," he announced, and added, "We won't lose our heads." Asked how long he and Scadding could carry on, he declared that they could manage another day. At five the Hon. A. L. Macdonald, Premier of Nova Scotia, arrived at the mine. The hopes of the rescuers were reviving, for the new men were working at furious speed. Later Dr Robertson whispered through the 'phone that the

gallery was filling with dust, so he felt sure that the rescue party were not far away.

By Wednesday morning the wall of rock which separated the rescuers from those they hoped to rescue was only a few feet thick. A new diamond drill was being used to cut through it, for, of course, explosives were out of the question. But the trapped men had been prisoners for nine days, and the anxiety was breathless. It was certain they could not last very much longer, for they were now quite unable to reach the tube and the food which had been passed down it. The question was, would the roof hold, for another fall would be fatal. Scadding spoke through the 'phone. His voice was a mere whisper.

"Are you getting through?" he asked. The answer was "Yes," and the speaker up above heard a faint sob. Then the doctor spoke to his wife.

"Don't worry, darling," she answered. "They are getting through to you all right. Not long now."

Back came his reply. "O.K. Both of us realize what you are up against. If necessary, Scadding and I can hold out another twenty-four hours. Scadding's feet are bad, but he can carry on all right."

The drill ground away incessantly, and at thirty-six minutes past twelve on Wednesday, April 22, the rescue workers broke through into the black cavern. An urgent message was sent up for hack-saws, for a mass of timber and metal prevented a passage being made large enough for a man's body to pass. The steel encountered at the last moment was the twisted remains of the rails used many years earlier to carry ore cars in the gallery. It is no easy task to cut through steel rails with a hack-saw, especially when the worker has to lie flat on his stomach, but the men working at this task were able to talk directly to the doctor and Scadding, and were surprised and pleased to find how strong their voices



sounded. While the rails were being cut 'muckers' cleared loose earth from the passage, and others got ready the stretchers on which the rescued men were to be brought out. Around the mouth of the mine surged a huge crowd almost delirious with excitement and kept back by a strong contingent of mounted police. Broadcasting went on the whole time, every incident being described to the millions who listened eagerly in all parts of the world.

"The way is open," came the news at last. "Dr Davis is going through. He is inside the gallery." Dr F. R. Davis was Minister of Public Health for Nova Scotia. He carried restoratives and a hypodermic syringe. The first thing he did was to give the two prisoners an injection in order to relieve their pain. They were both suffering from cramp. He reported that they were in no immediate danger. Up above members of the hospital emergency unit waited in the roped-off space, but their wait was a long one, for the opening was not yet sufficiently large to admit the passage of stretchers. They were told that it was not likely the rescued men could be got out before half-past two.

Medical supplies, blankets, and hot-water bottles were taken down, and meantime Jim Simpson, John Morrell, and H. Hirschfeld, the three 'face-workers' who had done the lion's share in the tunnel work, were slowly but steadily enlarging the opening, so as to make room for the stretchers. At half-past one word was sent up that only a few timbers and rocks remained to be removed, but those below were well aware that the danger was not yet past. The sinkage was still continuing, and the hollow at the surface was now no less than fifteen feet deep. Yet Morrell was quite cheery. "There's nothing to it now," he said. "It's plain sailing."

Then came Dr Robertson's own voice through the

telephone to his brother-in-law, who was waiting anxiously: "Hello, Charlie. They're here. I'm signing off."

"Just like him," said the other, speaking to a friend. "No dramatics. It's his sense of humour that has saved him."

A little later and word came up to the waiting crowd that the passage was open and the men were being brought out. Brought out! Would you believe it—they both wanted to walk. Dr Robertson could walk, but poor Scadding's feet were in a dreadful state, swollen and blistered. Very slowly and carefully the rescuers drew them through the narrow, quaking tunnel. They were wrapped in dry, heated blankets, and for the first time for ten endless days were able to appreciate the blessings of warmth.

"Boys, you're wonderful," said the doctor as they carried him. "Thank you very much."

The crowd at the top remained silent as the first stretcher came into sight above ground. They stared at its occupant. A board walk had been built across the muddy ground to make the carrying easier, and as the stretcher was taken towards the ambulance movie cameras clicked and whirred all round. The doctor's face was covered with ten days' beard, his cheeks were yellow and sunken, and his once-powerful frame was much shrunken; but his eyes were bright, and he was smiling cheerfully. Scadding was even more emaciated, and it was impossible to see his face, for a handkerchief had been laid over his eyes, which were weakened by the long darkness, so that it was thought best not to expose them to sunlight. Yet he too was quite cheerful.

Some one tried to cheer, but the "Hip! Hip! Hip! Hurrah!" died away. The fact was the spectators were too greatly moved to cheer. Then some Salvation Army lassies started "Praise God, from Whom all blessings



flow," and this was taken up with a will, and the wild and rocky country resounded with the notes of the Doxology. The rescued men were laid in an ambulance and taken at once to a small hospital which had been made ready a mile away. Shortly afterwards Dr Gallie, who was in charge, stated, "Both are in excellent condition, laughing and joking. So far as I can see both are O.K. Why, Dr Robertson is directing his own treatment!"

When he reached his bedside Dr Robertson actually began to undress himself. Of course he was not allowed to continue this operation. He pulled a tiny piece of candle from the pocket of his soaked garments and laughingly said, "I don't think I'll need this now." Soon afterwards he was sound asleep.

T. C. BRIDGES AND H. H. TILTMAN  
*Further Heroes of Modern Adventure*

## THE RESCUE OF AN ARMY<sup>1</sup>

ON May 10, 1940, German forces invaded Belgium and Holland. The rulers of these countries appealed for aid to Britain and France, and allied troops advanced into Belgium to assist the Belgian army to stem the Nazi onrush. Direct military aid to Holland was more difficult to offer in so short a time. Five days later the Dutch army, overcome by pressure from German mechanized troops, by bands of enemy parachutists, and by 'fifth columnist' traitors, gave up the fight.

In Belgium the fierce struggle continued. Meanwhile the Germans had broken through the French lines, and penetrated deeply towards the coast. Immediate retreat towards the south would have minimized the danger of the B.E.F. in France being cut off. But the French hoped to close the gap which the Germans had made; moreover, a retreat would almost certainly have involved the destruction of the Belgian army, which was still fighting boldly, and the abandonment of the whole of Belgium to the Germans.

An effort was therefore made to keep the French and British forces in Belgium in touch, on the right hand with the main French army in France (re-formed under its new leader General Weygand), and on the left hand with the Belgian army.

This effort came to nothing. General Weygand's troops could not force back the Germans so as to make contact with our forces in Belgium. On the contrary the Nazi armoured divisions cut off all communications between the two allied forces, and swept round in the

<sup>1</sup> In this account I am indebted to the editor of *The Times* for kind permission to quote several passages from its columns



form of a scythe along the coast, from Boulogne to Calais, from Calais almost to Dunkirk. Supplies of ammunition and food, which came by way of Amiens and Abbeville, were completely severed. The position of the French and British forces in Belgium was serious indeed. On the left the gallant Belgian army was still keeping the enemy at bay, thus guarding our only line of retreat to the sea. But German pressure was steadily increasing.

Suddenly a new blow fell upon our already sorely pressed troops. The Belgian king, without consulting his Government, called upon his army to lay down its arms and cease resistance to the enemy. The effect of this surrender, totally unexpected as it was, can easily be realized. The whole of the left flank guarding our way to the coast was flung open to the enemy. At a moment's notice a line 30 miles long had to be protected by British troops already hard pressed.

The position of the Allied forces in Belgium was indeed desperate. Not only were they subject to violent attack on three sides by immense masses of mechanized troops and infantry, but the tremendous power of the Nazi air force gave additional violence to the attack. German jubilation knew no bounds. The pincer movement of their land army had almost completed its deadly grip. A few more miles of coast, and a great British army would be encircled, cut off from supplies and retreat alike; doomed to certain annihilation or capture. Little wonder that the Prime Minister warned the House of Commons to be prepared for "hard and heavy tidings." It seemed that only a miracle could save more than a small proportion of the threatened Allied forces.

The miracle happened. And it was brought about by grim determination and endurance on the part of the land forces themselves, by gallant resistance to German

air attacks on the part of our outnumbered Air Force, and, above all, by the amazing efforts of the Navy, supported by a host of volunteer craft of every kind.

The Germans did their utmost to get possession of Dunkirk, but it was splendidly defended by a garrison of French marines commanded by Admiral Abrial. Meanwhile, Calais, farther back along the coast, was holding out magnificently. Its eventual capture by the enemy was certain. But its garrison (three-quarters of whom were British and the remainder French) refused to surrender, and bitter was the street fighting for several days. When at last its effort was spent only thirty unwounded survivors were brought off by the Navy—the fate of the remainder was unknown. But by their courageous stand they had seriously weakened the pressure of the Germans on Dunkirk. Their sacrifice had enabled this port to be kept open, and an army thus to be saved from destruction.

Yet, even with Dunkirk still in Allied hands, the task of the retreating British army was a desperate one. They were almost surrounded on land. From the air they were subjected to constant attack. Wave after wave of bombers rained explosives upon Dunkirk itself, upon the only pier that remained in the port, upon the beaches and sand-dunes on which the waiting troops sought in vain for cover, and upon the ships which flowed steadily across the Channel to rescue the hard-pressed army. Artillery from the German divisions which were near enough to shell the port strengthened the German attack. At sea magnetic mines and U-boats vastly increased the perils which the British ships had to face.

The experiences of the men who fought their way back to Dunkirk will perhaps never be told fully. Those who endured the desperate journey, above all those who kept the way open by their heroic rearguard



defence, are little inclined to talk of their experiences. That it was a terrible, often a ghastly struggle, hardly needs saying. From hints let fall, here and there, by rescued soldiers, we can obtain a glimpse into the violence and horror of the scene.

"We have had a terrible time this last fortnight," said one man on reaching the shores of England. "Swimming canals, nights without sleep, and bombing attacks. Fifty or more Jerry planes would come over and drop their bombs. Just as we were recovering, over would come another fifty, and so on in relays."

"It has been simply Hell," exclaimed another, while the evacuation was still in progress. "But we are getting off the boys who stood in the triangle and resisted the worst that the Germans could do to them, and believe me, the Nazis don't love you. Their planes are everywhere. Our airmen have done magnificent work but it is volume we need. . . . We were continually bombed and machine-gunned from the air—hospital ships, troopships, everything."

Splendid but terrible feats of endurance were performed by the army in Belgium. Some of the divisions were fighting almost continuously from the time they had landed in Belgium. Before the surrender of King Leopold they had advanced 75 miles in several days, fought desperately with the Germans, and then were compelled to retreat, fighting all the way. The collapse of the Belgian army meant even more desperate efforts. A long, exposed line had to be covered in a few hours. Troops already tired had to cover the ground in forced marches to fill up the gaps. At one time nine divisions held a line 80 miles long, with battles going on day after day. The sheer numerical strength of the Germans was overwhelming. In spite of the terrific barrage put up by the British artillery, the German troops swarmed onward, as many apparently coming through the

barrage as went into it, though in fact their losses were terrific. Such pressure upon the weary B.E.F. men must have been utterly exhausting. But they did not give up.

The value of the work done by those battalions which kept the German hordes back while the rest of the B.E.F. was evacuated is beyond praise. One of these battalions was the Cameron Highlanders, who were guarding a town through which the retreating troops had to pass. A sergeant of one of these retreating divisions paid a heartfelt tribute to the gallant stand of the Highlanders when he had arrived safely in England.

"We saw the Jocks in a doorway and at corners," he says, "with their bayonets fixed. Whenever Jerry approached they just went for him. It was real hand-to-hand fighting. Several battalions withdrew safely through the town, and still the Camerons stuck it. It was a grand stand, and there is no doubt that it helped those other battalions to get away."

It was not only shells and bombs that the retreating troops had to face. The Germans did their best to spread a spirit of non-resistance among the British soldiers. Troops of one section had the following leaflet dropped amongst them by enemy aircraft:

"British soldiers!

Germans around! You are encircled!

German troops invaded Courtrai, Tournai, Valenciennes!

Lillers, Aire, St Omer are occupied.

Calais will be taken immediately.

Why do you fight further?

Do you really believe the announcements that the Germans kill their prisoners?

Come and see yourselves the contrary.

The match is finished. A fair enemy will be fairly treated."

There are no statistics available as to the effect these pamphlets had upon the retreating troops. But the fact that over 300,000 got safely back to Britain (ten



times as many as it was at first feared could be saved) suggests that the British Tommy, although he probably did not believe that the Germans killed their prisoners, none the less preferred to seek his own shores even through the hell of Dunkirk rather than to see for himself the quality of German hospitality. Even the attempt to appeal to the Briton's well-known love of sport was not convincing. He did not believe that the match was finished; and he went on to make a last-wicket stand that showed that glorious uncertainty was not confined to cricket.

Even when Dunkirk itself had been reached the danger was far from being over: indeed the force of the German air attack was more concentrated there, on the port and on the beaches, than anywhere else. The town and beaches were just a hell of bursting shells and bombs for days and nights on end. It was a hell, moreover, which was not even free from treachery. Spies were about, somehow communicating with the attacking hordes. It was noticed that wherever the Allied forces set up their headquarters, that spot was immediately bombed. They would transfer to a new position, this time, perhaps, an inconspicuous little house in a quiet street—but within a few hours that inconspicuous little house would become the target for a wave of German bombers. Stories are told, too, of Germans in British officers' uniform being present on the beaches, and, by misdirecting troops, attempting to disorganize the evacuation.

None the less the evacuation went on in spite of the enemy's attempts. Bombing, shelling, and treachery, these combined in an effort to prevent the rescue of the retreating army. That they succeeded in causing hardships, perils, and losses was inevitable. But prevent it they could not. Steadily the beaches and the solitary pier filled with men, and steadily a swarm of ships took

them aboard and brought them to the comparative safety of our shores.

The scene during the long days of embarkation was an amazing one, amazing in the contrast between the violent dangers which surrounded the men, and the apparent leisureliness of their embarkation. In reality there was nothing leisurely about the evacuation, but handling ships upon a difficult coast in adverse weather is not a task which can be hurried. Upon that last remaining pier stretching out into the sea a long tightly-packed queue of soldiers waited, as stolidly as if they were at a south coast resort on a Bank Holiday, preparing for a pleasure trip to the Isle of Wight. The sandy beaches around were strewn with dark patches of khaki figures, as scattered as possible to minimize the danger from bombers, but thick enough to offer a presentable target. There was not much singing or laughing among the waiting men. The situation was still too serious.

"I'll never forget that scene at Dunkirk," said one of the later evacuees. "Boats of every conceivable size and shape, from rowing boats upwards, were taking men off as fast as they could. The oil tanks in Dunkirk were blazing, and German aeroplanes were roaring overhead unloading their bombs. Men were wading up to their necks to join the boats."

• Boats! The whole success of the Dunkirk evacuation depended on little boats—those boats that in peace time take us round the lighthouse for a shilling; or the tiny cockle-shells which bob placidly on the waves a little way from the shore, with a fisherman's line hung hopefully over the side; or even the skiffs which had previously known no greater excitement than that of being propelled up and down the reaches of some quiet river. These were the inanimate heroes of Dunkirk. Owing to the shallowness of the water it is impossible



for any but small ships to approach the shore near the town, except in the narrow channels leading to the quay. The method of embarkation, therefore, was in the main for the larger ships—destroyers, trawlers, etc.—to anchor out to sea, and for the men to be taken out to them in small craft.

There were thousands of men to be evacuated. Obviously an immense number of small boats was needed to perform this work. As soon as the necessity for these boats became realized an urgent message was sent to every kind of boat-owner in the south-east of England. Fishermen, yachtsmen, yacht-builders, yachting clubs, river boatmen—all were asked to supply as many boats as they could at a moment's notice, though the precise purpose for which they were to be used could not at first be disclosed.

The response was tremendous. Every type of craft was offered, and volunteer crews to help in manning them leapt at the chance. The only difficulty was to keep back those whose help was not required. A naval officer who had won fame at the Battle of Jutland was highly indignant at being refused permission to go because he did not possess his own boat. One woman (women were not being used for the highly dangerous work) succeeded in getting aboard by imitating a man's voice. In some cases boats were commandeered where the owners were not immediately traceable. But no owner thought of complaining. One, indeed, rang up the authorities, but not to complain: only to say that there was a store of old brandy aboard his yacht which he hoped would be discovered and used.

Lads as well as men helped in the great task. A boy of fifteen helped his father in his motor-boat to make trips backward and forward from coast to coast, day and night, for thirty-six hours continuously. Another lad of seventeen, who helped to man one of the small

vessels, said afterwards: "I was very frightened at first, but the soldiers were not frightened and that bucked me up. Besides, there were so many air attacks that after the first dozen or so we got used to them." A statement that in itself gives some idea of what the volunteer crews and their rescued passengers had to put up with.

Persistent air attacks, indeed, made the task of these boats, whether they were engaged in transporting men across the Channel or merely ferrying them to the larger ships, one of constant peril. Boats were often riddled with shrapnel when they returned to England. Rescued and rescuers alike had alarming experiences.

"When we were hit," said one soldier, "we swam ashore, but when she did not go down we swam back again to take her out of harbour. But she turned turtle, and we had to swim again. Some of us were swimming for hours, and were then picked up by a British warship."

Another man, after swimming seven or eight miles, was able to get hold of a table, and sat in this until picked up.

One large motor-boat towed eight wherries filled with cans of fresh water across the Channel. When these had been delivered the wherries were used for ferrying. Eight soldiers at a time waded out to them, and each wherry in turn delivered its load to the motor-boat, which then transferred them to the larger ships. It was dark when the last load of men was being carried from the shore. "I can't see who you are," called out the officer in command on the beach. "Who are you?" "Just one of the crew of a seaside motor-boat," replied the man in the wherry. "Thank God for such men as you," shouted back the officer. And he voiced the sentiments not only of the soldiers waiting on the beaches, but of a whole nation.



In praising the heroism of these volunteer rescuers we must not forget the work of the Navy. Without the British fleet the task of evacuating an army would have been impossible. It was upon the warships that the success of the undertaking pivoted. It was the warships that kept the way across the Channel open. It was the warships whose guns helped to keep back the German land army from Dunkirk, and whose anti-aircraft fire helped to diminish, though it could not prevent, the fierce bombing attacks of the Nazi aircraft. It was the warships, too, which played perhaps the chief part in actually transporting the rescued army back to the English coast.

Nor was the work achieved without loss. Thirty out of the 220 naval vessels employed (light warships, tugs, mine-sweepers, etc.) were lost. The losses included six destroyers, one of which, H.M.S. *Wakeful*, took part in the last war. These were no light losses, but it was remarkable that they were not heavier in view of the sustained rain of bombs which the ships had to endure.

The following summary of one warship's adventures will give some idea of the experiences the sailors had to pass through. This ship set off with three others for the Flanders coast, and was attacked several times by dive-bombers on the way over. While waiting her turn to enter Dunkirk harbour she was bombed again and again, but was still undamaged, though she was successful in bringing down one of her attackers. She was bombed on her way into harbour, and bombed again while the troops were embarking. When she left harbour she remained for a while to give protection to a transport ship. This was bombed twelve times, but anti-aircraft fire from the warship hindered the aim of the attacking planes, and the transport was not hit. However, one bomb unfortunately fell near the warship and burst on

the surface of the sea. Not only did the flying splinters cause some casualties, but they also punctured the main steam pipe. So the damaged ship transferred her passengers, anchored, and set to work on the punctured pipe, during which time attack after attack was made by German planes. But no further hit was made on the ship. With the pipe patched up, and in spite of holes in her side, she returned to her base at a speed of twenty knots.

When the task of evacuation was nearly complete Mr Churchill, in a speech to the House of Commons, paid tribute to the fine work of all three forces. Of the Navy he said:

"They had to operate upon the difficult coast, often in adverse weather, under an almost ceaseless hail of bombs and an increasing concentration of artillery fire. Nor were the seas, as I have said, themselves free from mines and torpedoes. It was in conditions such as these that our men carried on, with little or no rest, for days and nights on end, making trip after trip across the dangerous waters, bringing with them always men whom they had rescued. The numbers they have brought back are the measure of their devotion and their courage."

The part played by the R.A.F. in the evacuation was less conspicuous. Some soldiers, bombed again and again as they made their way to Dunkirk, and as they waited on the beaches there for transport, were inclined to underrate its achievements. But our Air Force, outnumbered though it was, played a valuable part in the deliverance of the army. Its operations were often carried out beyond the vision of the British troops. The enemy's communications were frequently harassed by our bombers, and this helped considerably in relieving the pressure on our retreating land forces.

As for our fighters, they achieved amazing feats



against the German bomber squadrons and their escorts. On more than one occasion large formations of Nazi aircraft were dispersed by a much smaller British force. One German machine was driven into the water by the mere charge of an R.A.F. plane which had run out of ammunition. Heavy though the German bombing was, it would have been far more disastrous in its effects had it not been for the continuous efforts of our airmen to screen the process of evacuation.

Some of the figures of R.A.F. successes make astounding reading. One squadron of Defiant fighters shot down thirty-seven enemy planes without one of the British squadron being lost. The spirit of the young airmen is well illustrated by the adventures of one Hurricane pilot. His machine was disabled in the course of a fight with a Messerschmitt, and he was forced to descend by parachute. He landed on the beach some fifteen miles from Dunkirk. Carrying his parachute he walked along the beach to Dunkirk, where he managed to get a place on a paddle-steamer transporting troops to Folkestone. Next day he rejoined his squadron and was out on patrol once again.

So, fighting boldly itself, protected as far as possible by the R.A.F., and carried by the Navy and its volunteer helpers, this great army of 335,000 men was rescued, in Mr Churchill's words, "out of the jaws of death and shame." Day after day the troop-laden ships slid into the harbours of the south-east coast, disgorged their khaki cargo, and set out to sea again to absorb another load.

Let us picture the scene at one of these south-east coast resorts. The front is cleared, and armed sentries guard the approaches. A destroyer is at the harbour pier, its long guns seeming to rest on a field of tin-hats, so tightly packed are its decks with soldiers. A stream of khaki-clad figures pours from the ship's gangway to

the jetty. The men are grimy, unshaven, and mostly very tired. They have had no sleep for several days. There is no time to pause for the hearty meal that most of them could do with. There are thousands more to be brought over, and nothing must be allowed to block the steady flow. However, there are light refreshments supplied by mobile canteens.

The men move from the quay to the railway station, stack rifles and ammunition on the platform, and pack themselves into the carriages. Some are fortunate enough to find themselves in a Pullman carriage, and fall asleep almost immediately, their heads resting on their arms upon the table before them. There are some inexhaustible spirits able to give vent to a cheer or snatch of song. One man has brought over a German bugle as a souvenir and blows it lustily. But most of the men are too tired to exhibit such high spirits. What they want above all is sleep.

The evacuation was completed during the night of June 3rd. Until the last moment the rearguard put up an heroic resistance, defending first the suburbs and then the town itself, fighting from house to house. The enemy, constantly reinforced, attacked without ceasing; but the French defenders did not throw in their hand. To the last they met attack with counter-attack. The Germans were in possession of the town by the time the last defenders were taken off, and the process of embarkation was carried out with machine-gun bullets raking the boats.

So ended the evacuation of Dunkirk.

When the last British troops had left the shores of Dunkirk King George summed up the feelings of the nation in a message which he sent to the Prime Minister. The message paid tribute to the courage and brilliant leadership which made the evacuation possible, and ended with these words:



"While we acclaim this great feat, in which our French allies too have played so noble a part, we think with heartfelt sympathy of the loss and sufferings of those brave men whose self-sacrifice has turned disaster into triumph."

G. F. L.

# THIS FREEDOM

## FROM FORTRESS TO FREEDOM

The chief characters in this tale are Peter Simple (who himself tells the story) and his friend Terence O'Brien, Peter's senior by a few years. Both are midshipmen during the time of the Napoleonic wars. They have just been captured by the French.

Although the extract which follows is taken from a novel, the episode is founded on the real adventures of some naval officers who escaped from a French prison.

**I**T was exactly four months from the time of our capture that we arrived at our destined prison at Givet.

"Peter," said O'Brien, as he looked hastily at the fortifications, and the river which divided the two towns, "I see no reason, either English or French, that we should not eat our Christmas dinner in England. I've a bird's-eye view of the outside, and now have only to find out whereabouts we may be in the inside."

I must say that, when I looked at ditches and high ramparts, I had a different opinion; so had a gendarme who was walking by our side, and who had observed O'Brien's scrutiny, and who quietly said to him in French, "*Vous le croyez possible?*"

"Everything is possible to a brave man—the French armies have proved that," answered O'Brien.

"You are right," replied the gendarme, pleased with the compliment to his nation; "I wish you success, you deserve it; but——" and he shook his head.

"If I could but obtain a plan of the fortress," said O'Brien, "I would give five napoleons for one," and he looked at the gendarme.

"I cannot see any objection to an officer, although a prisoner, studying fortification," replied the gendarme. "In two hours you will be within the walls; and now I recollect, in the map of the two towns, the fortress is



laid down sufficiently accurately to give you an idea of it. But we have conversed too long." So saying, the gendarme dropped into the rear.

In a quarter of an hour we arrived at the Place d'Armes, where we were met, as usual, with another detachment of troops, and drummers, who paraded us through the town previous to our being drawn up before the governor's house. This, I ought to have observed, was, by order of Government, done at every town we passed through; it was very contemptible, but prisoners were so scarce that they made all the display of us that they could. As we stopped at the governor's house the gendarme, who had left us in the square, made a sign to O'Brien, as much as to say, "I have it." O'Brien took out five napoleons, which he wrapped in paper and held in his hand. In a minute or two the gendarme came up and presented O'Brien with an old silk handkerchief, saying, "*Votre mouchoir, monsieur.*"

"*Merci,*" replied O'Brien, putting the handkerchief which contained the map into his pocket, "*voici à boire, mon ami*"; and he slipped the paper with the five napoleons into the hand of the gendarme, who immediately retreated.

This was very fortunate for us, as we afterwards discovered that a mark had been put against O'Brien's and my name not to allow parole or permission to leave the fortress even under surveillance. Indeed, even if it had not been so, we never should have obtained it, as the lieutenant killed by O'Brien was nearly related to the commandant of the fortress, who was as much a *mauvais sujet* as his kinsman. Having waited the usual hour before the governor's house to answer to our muster roll, and to be stared at, we were dismissed; and in a few minutes found ourselves shut up in one of the strongest fortresses in France.

If I doubted the practicability of escape when I

examined the exterior, when we were ushered into the interior of the fortress I felt that it was impossible, and I stated my opinion to O'Brien. We were conducted into a yard surrounded by a high wall; the buildings appropriated for the prisoners were built with lean-to roofs on one side, and at each side of the square was a sentry looking down upon us. It was very much like the dens which they now build for bears, only so much larger. O'Brien answered me with "Pish! Peter, it's the very security of the place which will enable us to get out of it. But don't talk, as there are always spies about who understand English."

We were shown into a room allotted to six of us; our baggage was examined and then delivered over to us. "Better and better, Peter," observed O'Brien, "they've not found it out!"

"What?" inquired I.

"Oh, only a little selection of articles which might be useful to us by and by."

He then showed me what I never before was aware of; that he had a false bottom to his trunk, but it was papered over like the rest, and very ingeniously concealed. "And what is there, O'Brien?" inquired I.

"Never mind; I had them made at Montpellier. You'll see by and by."

The others, who were lodged in the same room, then came in, and after staying a quarter of an hour went away at the sound of the dinner-bell. "Now, Peter," said O'Brien, "I must get rid of my load. Turn the key."

O'Brien then undressed himself, and when he threw off his shirt and drawers showed me a rope of silk, with a knot at every two feet, about half an inch in size, wound round and round his body. There was about sixty feet of it altogether. As I unwound it he, turning round and round, observed, "Peter, I've worn this rope ever since I left Montpellier, and you've no idea of the



pain I have suffered; but we must go to England, that's decided upon."

When I looked at O'Brien, as the rope was wound off, I could easily imagine that he had really been in great pain; in several places his flesh was quite raw from the continual friction, and after it was all unwound, and he had put on his clothes, he fainted away. I was very much alarmed, but I recollected to put the rope into the trunk and take out the key before I called for assistance. He soon came to, and on being asked what was the matter said that he was subject to fits from his infancy. He looked earnestly at me, and I showed him the key, which was sufficient.

For some days O'Brien, who really was not very well, kept to his room. During this time he often examined the map given him by the gendarme. One day he said to me, "Peter, can you swim?"

"No," replied I; "but never mind that."

"But I must mind it, Peter, for observe, we shall have to cross the River Meuse, and boats are not always to be had. You observe that this fortress is washed by the river on one side; and as it is the strongest side it is the least guarded—we must escape by it. I can see my way clear enough till we get to the second rampart on the river, but when we drop into the river, if you cannot swim, I must contrive to hold you up, somehow or another."

"Are you then determined to escape, O'Brien? I cannot perceive how we are even to get up this wall, with four sentries staring us in the face."

"Never do you mind that, Peter, mind your own business; and first tell me, do you intend to try your luck with me?"

"Yes," replied I, "most certainly; if you have sufficient confidence in me to take me as your companion."

"To tell you the truth, Peter, I would not give a farthing to escape without you. We were taken together, and, please God, we'll take ourselves off together; but

that must not be for this month; our greatest help will be the dark nights and foul weather."

The prison was by all accounts very different from Verdun and some others. We had no parole, and but little communication with the townspeople. Some were permitted to come in and supply us with various articles; but their baskets were searched, to see that they contained nothing that might lead to an escape on the part of the prisoners. Without the precautions that O'Brien had taken, any attempt would have been useless. Still, O'Brien, as soon as he left his room, did obtain several little articles—especially balls of twine—for one of the amusements of the prisoners was flying kites. This, however, was put a stop to, in consequence of one of the strings, whether purposely or not I cannot say, catching the lock of the musket carried by one of the sentries, who looked down upon us, and twitching it out of his hand; after which an order was given by the commandant for no kites to be permitted. This was fortunate for us, as O'Brien, by degrees, purchased all the twine belonging to the other prisoners; and, as we were more than three hundred in number, it amounted to sufficient to enable him, by stealth, to lay it up into very strong cord, or rather into a sort of square plait, known only to sailors. "Now, Peter," said he one day, "I want nothing more than an umbrella for you."

"Why an umbrella for me?"

"To keep you from being drowned with too much water, that's all."

"Rain won't drown me."

"No, no, Peter; but buy a new one as soon as you can."

I did so. O'Brien boiled up a quantity of bees' wax and oil and gave it several coats of this preparation. He then put it carefully away in the ticking of his bed. I asked him whether he intended to make known his plan to any of the other prisoners; he replied in the



negative, saying that there were so many of them who could not be trusted, that he would trust no one. . . .

About a week afterwards O'Brien came to me and said, "The new moon's quartered in with foul weather; if it holds, prepare for a start. I have put what is necessary in your little haversack; it may be to-night. Go to bed now, and sleep for a week if you can, for you'll get but little sleep, if we succeed, for the week to come."

This was about eight o'clock. I went to bed, and about twelve I was roused by O'Brien, who told me to dress myself carefully and come down to him in the yard. I did so without disturbing anybody, and found the night as dark as pitch (it was then November), and raining in torrents; the wind was high, howling round the yard, and sweeping in the rain in every direction as it eddied to and fro.

It was some time before I could find O'Brien, who was hard at work; and, as I had already been made acquainted with all his plans, I will now explain them. At Montpellier he had procured six large pieces of iron, about eighteen inches long, with a gimlet at one end of each, and a square at the other, which fitted to a handle which unshipped. For precaution, he had a spare handle, but each handle fitted to all the irons. O'Brien had screwed one of these pieces of iron between the interstices of the stones of which the wall was built, and sitting astride on that, was fixing another about three feet above. When he had accomplished this, he stood upon the lower iron, and supporting himself by the second, which about met his hip, he screwed in a third, always fixing them about six inches on one side of the other, and not one above the other. When he had screwed in his six irons he was about half up the wall, and then he fastened his rope, which he had carried round his neck, to the upper iron, and lowering himself down unscrewed the four lower irons; then

ascending by the rope, he stood upon the fifth iron, and supporting himself by the upper iron, recommenced his task. By these means he arrived in the course of an hour and a half to the top of the wall, where he fixed his last iron, and making his rope fast, he came down again.

"Now, Peter," said he, "there is no fear of the sentries seeing us; if they had the eyes of cats, they could not until we are on the top of the wall; but then we arrive at the glacis, and we must creep to the ramparts on our bellies. I am going up with all the materials. Give me your haversack—you will go up lighter; and recollect, should any accident happen to me, you run to bed again. If, on the contrary, I pull the rope up and down three or four times, you may sheer up it as fast as you can."

O'Brien then loaded himself with the two knapsacks, iron crows, and other implements he had procured; and, last of all, with the umbrella. "Peter, if the rope bears me with all this, it is clear it will bear such a creature as you are, therefore don't be afraid." So whispering, he commenced his ascent; in about three minutes he was up, and the rope pulled. I immediately followed him, and found the rope very easy to climb, from the knots at every two feet, which gave me a hold for my feet, and I was up in as short a time as he was. He caught me by the collar, putting his wet hand on my mouth, and I lay down beside him while he pulled up the rope. We then crawled on our stomachs across the glacis till we arrived at the rampart. The wind blew tremendously, and the rain pattered down so fast that the sentries did not perceive us; indeed, it was no fault of theirs, for it was impossible to have made us out.

It was some time before O'Brien could find out the point exactly above the drawbridge of the first ditch; at last he did—he fixed his crowbar in and lowered down the rope. "Now, Peter, I had better go first again; when I shake the rope from below, all's right."



O'Brien descended, and in a few minutes the rope again shook; I followed him, and found myself received in his arms upon the meeting of the drawbridge, but the drawbridge itself was up. O'Brien led the way across the chains, and I followed him. When we had crossed the moat we found a barrier-gate locked; this puzzled us. O'Brien pulled out his picklocks to pick it, but without success; here we were fast.

"We must undermine the gate, O'Brien; we must pull up the pavement until we can creep under."

"Peter, you are a fine fellow; I never thought of that."

We worked very hard until the hole was large enough, using the crowbar which was left and a little wrench which O'Brien had with him. By these means we got under the gate in the course of an hour or more. This gate led to the lower rampart, but we had a covered way to pass through before we arrived at it. We proceeded very cautiously, when we heard a noise; we stopped, and found that it was a sentry, who was fast asleep, and snoring. Little expecting to find one here we were puzzled; pass him we could not well, as he was stationed on the very spot where we required to place our crowbar to descend the lower rampart into the river. O'Brien thought for a moment. "Peter," said he, "now is the time for you to prove yourself a man. He is fast asleep, but his noise must be stopped. I will stop his mouth, but at the very moment that I do so you must throw open the pan of his musket, and then he cannot fire it." "I will, O'Brien; don't fear me."

We crept cautiously up to him, and O'Brien motioning me to put my thumb upon the pan, I did so, and the moment that O'Brien put his hand on the soldier's mouth I threw open the pan. The fellow struggled, and snapped his lock as a signal, but, of course, without discharging his musket, and in a minute he was not only gagged but bound by O'Brien, with my assistance.

Leaving him there, we proceeded to the rampart, and fixing the crowbar again, O'Brien descended; I followed him, and found him in the river hanging on to the rope; the umbrella was opened and turned upwards, the preparation made it resist the water, and, as previously explained to me by O'Brien, I had only to hold on at arm's length to two beackets which he had affixed to the point of the umbrella which was under water. To the same part O'Brien had a tow-line, which taking in his teeth, he towed me down with the stream to about a hundred yards clear of the fortress, where we landed. O'Brien was so exhausted that for a few minutes he remained quite motionless; I also was benumbed with the cold. "Peter," said he, "thank God we have succeeded so far; now must we push on as far as we can, for we shall have daylight in two hours."

O'Brien took out his flask of spirits, and we both drank a half tumbler at least, but we should not, in our state, have been affected with a bottle. We now walked along the river-side till we fell in with a small craft, with a boat towing stern; O'Brien swam to it, and cutting the painter without getting in, towed it on shore. The oars were fortunately in the boat. I got in, we shoved off, and rowed away down the stream till the dawn of day. "All's right, Peter; now we'll land. This is the Forest of Ardennes." We landed, replaced the oars in the boat, and pushed her off into the stream, to induce people to suppose that she had broken adrift, and then hastened into the thickest of the wood. It still rained hard; I shivered, and my teeth chattered with the cold, but there was no help for it. We again took a dram of spirits, and, worn out with fatigue and excitement, soon fell fast asleep upon a bed of leaves which we had collected together.

CAPTAIN MARRYAT, *Peter Simple*



## A VALIANT EFFORT

Captain J. L. Hardy was one of the most daring and persistent escapers of the Great War of 1914-1918. He was taken prisoner soon after arriving in France in August, 1914, and for over three years he made effort after effort to escape. The story which follows tells how he broke out of the camp at Halle, one of the most formidable of German prison camps. Though he was subsequently recaptured, he had the satisfaction of knowing that he had got away from a prison which was regarded by the Germans as impregnable; indeed, only one other prisoner ever succeeded in achieving the same feat. It is also gratifying to be able to record that his escaping efforts were at last rewarded in March-April, 1918, when, with a companion, he made his way over the Dutch frontier.

ON three sides the camp was, as I have said, shut in by buildings. Those on two sides were occupied by the prisoners; the third was a long two-storied building, and contained the guard-room, the parcel-room, and upstairs the quartermaster's store. This building was not accessible to the prisoners except during the time that parcels were being given out. In front of it ran a high barbed-wire fence with a gate in the centre, at which a sentry was stationed. When one went to get parcels the sentry allowed one to pass through the fence and walk to the parcel-room, from which there was no other exit. To get there one walked down a short passage; half-way down the latter was a staircase which led up to a landing, on which were two doors, one that of the censor's office, the other that of the quartermaster's stores. This latter was invariably locked.

Now beyond this building was a very small garden where a sentry was stationed; it was lit at night by a bright arc-lamp and was cut off from the street by high iron railings. I am afraid that all this is very difficult

to follow, but I may perhaps simplify things a little by explaining that, should one be able by any means to reach the roof of the building in which the parcel-room was situated, and to let oneself into the little garden and scale the railings unseen by the sentry, one would find oneself in the open street, and free. It was intensely improbable that one could show oneself at all on the roof without being seen by at least one sentry; the chances of landing in, and crossing, that tiny brilliantly lit garden without being stopped or fired at were infinitesimal. The likelihood of a man being able to climb those railings and then jump into the street without being challenged either by another sentry or a passer-by was remote. Nevertheless this is what I decided to attempt, though the very thought of it made me shiver. The fact remains that I was at the end of my tether, and I saw no other hope.

My first job was to find some way of getting into the quartermaster's stores, from whence I could, I believed, get out on to the roof. The sentry on the wire fence was authorized to allow prisoners through to visit the censor while he was at work, and this fact gave me access to the door of the Q.M.'s stores, which, as I have said, was on the same landing as that of the censor's office. On the other hand, any efforts on my part to force this door would most certainly be heard by the censor and his staff. A lock can, however, be *picked* with scarcely any noise, and it therefore became apparent to me that I must depend on my skill in this direction to help me. There is nothing better for this purpose than the thin strong steel wire used for stiffening an ordinary officer's cap, and with this I made two implements and spent several days practising on any available locks within the camp. In this way I became very proficient, and had perfect confidence in my ability to overcome this first difficulty.



I had decided that this time I would put my German to the test, and travel if possible by train. Indeed, I had no other choice, for the weather was bitterly cold and I had before me a journey of three hundred miles. I had been warned that it would be fatal to travel openly within at least forty miles of the frontier, so I chose Bremen as my destination, it being a large town, and planned to go westwards on foot from there, and to try to cross into Holland through the marshes near the coast.

As the day drew near I became very nervous. Only one friend, Captain Cutbill, of the Suffolk Regiment, knew what I was about, and I did not even tell Wasilief,<sup>1</sup> for it was an impossible stunt for two, and I was afraid he would feel very much hurt at my trying without him. I used to lie awake at night thinking over the difficulties before me, and often I would picture myself cornered in the garden like an unfortunate rat, while a frightened and furious sentry blazed at me. It was a very dangerous undertaking (but probably not so dangerous as I imagined); even should I succeed in breaking out of camp, my prospects of getting clear of Germany were hardly worth considering. Failing to reach Holland I should be punished, inevitably be separated from my friends, and probably find myself later in a camp stronger, if possible, even than Halle. I was frankly terrified, and would have given all I possessed to be able to renounce the whole affair with a clear conscience; but I could not, and for that I am very thankful.

The day arrived, and I dressed myself in my room with the feelings of a condemned man. Over my civilian clothes I wore uniform, and carried with me some food, my compass, and a small map of the country

<sup>1</sup> A Russian with whom Hardy had made a previous attempt to escape

between Bremen and the Dutch frontier which I had been at some pains to obtain. It was about three o'clock in the afternoon, and the sentry, on our producing a couple of letters ostensibly for the censor, allowed Cutbill and myself to pass through the wicket. We crept very, very quietly up the stairs, passed the censor's office on tiptoe, and reached our door. I produced the two small wires, and, inserting one in the lock, lifted the spring and showed my friend how to hold it braced. I knelt down and, pushing in the second wire, felt for the bolt. Twice my wire engaged, and then, when I strained, slipped with a loud click. We both swore steadily under our breath, and I sweated, expecting every moment to hear the door behind us open, to look round and find some spotty little German clerk staring at us in astonishment. Once more I tried and felt the wire now grip firmly into the slot. I pressed—pressed—and at last felt the bolt slide back and the door open under my hand. I got up and, slipping off my coat, handed it to my friend.

“Good-bye, old thing. Thanks frightfully.”

“Good-bye; good luck! I wish to the Lord I was coming with you.”

“I wish to Heaven you were!” I said, and moving into the room closed the door behind me and locked it again. I found the stores divided into two rooms, and had another locked door to tackle, but I made short work of this and began to take off the rest of my uniform in the little room in which I now found myself. So far everything had gone as well as I could possibly hope, and I now had to look about for some material to make a rope. There was nothing in this room which could possibly help me, although I had (most unwisely) depended on finding something there. If the worst came to the worst I should be obliged to tear my uniform into strips, but this did not seem at all a



satisfactory solution, so I set to work on the lock of the second door again, and found in the other half of the stores a large bundle of leather straps, which would serve my purpose admirably. Having plaited several of these together to form a rope, I sat down to wait for darkness. Extraordinary though it may seem when one remembers the exceedingly unpleasant task which lay before me, I managed to have a sleep, and on waking amused myself by reading some very ancient German newspapers. Suddenly, about five o'clock, I heard a key in the lock of the outer door. Oh, Lord! they knew then? The sentry must have reported to his relief that I was with the censor and, on my not returning, inquiries must have been made, in which case they would know that I was hiding somewhere in the building. In horrible anxiety I knelt and peeped through the key-hole, and there to my immense relief saw a German N.C.O. in charge of a party of orderlies, who were engaged in carrying bedsteads out of the room. There was a small window in my compartment which looked out on the courtyard of the camp, and from here I could see my friend gazing at the building with a comical, troubled look on his face, evidently thinking that I had been caught.

The fatigue party did not remain there to worry me for long, for I heard them depart, locking the door behind them. I noticed that it was raining, though not heavily, and this distressed me, for I had not been able to obtain a greatcoat, try as I would. About half-past six it was getting dusk and the lights were turned on, for the Germans here, as I have said, were remarkably careful and gave away no chances. By seven o'clock it would have been dark but for the arc-lamps, and I judged that the moment had come. I am afraid my hands were not very steady as I pulled a couple of large boxes into the middle of the room, and putting

one on top of the other reached the skylight. I pushed it open and then, giving a vigorous kick, did a sort of "both hands leading" and scrambled out on to the roof. In a moment I was back again and had closed the skylight behind me. It was *impossible*. I had never realized before how impossible it was. The fact that prisoners were not able to approach near to the sentries' beat had prevented my appreciating the fact that at least three of them had a direct view of my roof. There was an arc-lamp on the roof; it was as bright as day up there, and probably I had already been seen. I stood there dumbfounded and feeling absolutely desperate. I had burned my boats behind me with a vengeance, for no one was allowed in the parcel-room or censor's office after 4 P.M., and I should be arrested and everything would be discovered if I tried to get back. What on earth should I do? The others would think I had funked it, and I *did* funk it, for it looked like suicide. In my despair I prayed for help, though God knows what help I expected. Outside it was raining—by Jove, it was raining—such a sudden downpour as I have seldom seen. I had no coat, I thought; if I were out in it I should be drenched. Everybody would be drenched. The sentries would—O-o-oh! the sentries would be in their boxes! Slowly it dawned upon me that the answer to my prayer had come, and then I jumped for it. In a moment my hands were gripping the edge of the skylight—set teeth and a heave, and I was on the roof. Not a soul was to be seen in the courtyard of the camp; every sentry was in his box. I stood up on the roof in the deluge, fixed my rope, pulled once heavily upon it, and then, throwing myself clear of the gutter, slid down. I landed with a bump not more than four yards from the sentry (who stood in his box), and ran down to the railings. Every moment I expected to hear a shout behind me, but my man had bowed his



head to the beating rain and had seen nothing. The railings were easy—much easier than I had anticipated; just one short scramble and I was in the street. There was no one about; I had not been seen, and, turning to the left, I ran off with my head in a whirl. I had gone perhaps a hundred yards when I stopped for an instant and looked back. I could scarcely believe what I had done. Those blazing lights—those masses of barbed wire—those dogs and sentries—they had all been of no avail to hold me. I was soaked to the skin and very cold; I had no friend and nowhere to lay my head, but I had done it! I was in a state of indescribable elation. And so I looked on Halle camp for the last, last time, and sped on.

CAPTAIN J. L. HARDY  
*I Escape*

## PASSING THE POST

Captain H. A. Cartwright was captured in the first month of the Great War. For nearly four years he remained a prisoner, though he made numerous attempts to get back to England. Several times he got out of camp successfully but was recaptured. In August, 1918, he found himself at Aachen camp, only a mile or so from the Dutch frontier. As usual, his first thought was how to get away. He managed this by being lowered from the window of an upper room in the prison building with wire stolen from an electric lamp, and skilfully dodging the sentries.

Although the frontier was so near it was not advisable to try to cross near the town. The line was closely guarded there. Cartwright therefore decided to travel about fifteen miles northward on his first night, lie up in a wood during the day, and then cross the frontier on the next night. From his map he made out that the frontier was marked by a small stream with a railway line running parallel to it on the German side.

After surmounting various difficulties he reached the wood just after daylight.

**I**LAY undisturbed in the wood all day. I was wet through and therefore cold, although it was a warm and fairly fine day. I had my few biscuits and bits of chocolate and had eaten a large meal before I left the camp, so that, although I could have done with the contents of my Burberry pockets, I was not excessively hungry. I had filled all my pockets with ears of wheat during the night and spent a great part of the day rubbing out and eating the grain, but this provided more occupation than sustenance.

I came out of the wood at about 9.30 P.M., but it was still too light and a good many people were about, so I got inside a corn stook and lay curled up there for about an hour, and very comfortable it was after lying in wet undergrowth all day.

At about 10.30 I started off on a compass bearing,



my direction being a little north of west, but, as on the night before, I got on very slowly on account of the many new features which were not shown on my map. In attempting to check my position and in avoiding all places where there was a likelihood of encountering natives I was forced to follow a line more and more to the north of my proper course. I well knew the danger of this and took a turn due south whenever I was able. The danger of travelling too far north lay in the fact that, two or three kilometres north of the point at which I aimed, the frontier turned westwards at right angles to the stream which I have mentioned above. If I crossed the railway and stream too far to the north I should therefore be still in Germany.

When I was within two or three kilometres of the frontier I had to pass a patch of very close country; the fences, which were often thick hedges with plenty of barbed wire in the weak places, held me up long and often. I tried not to use any kind of lane or enclosed track, for I knew that they were just the sort of defiles in which, in that close country, sentries would be posted; but about half an hour before I found the railway for which I was looking I was forced, by fences which I could not negotiate, into a narrow lane.

I was hardly in it when I saw a figure approaching me and dropped silently against the hedge-bottom on the right of the lane. The figure was coming on the left of the lane, and had it kept to that side would have passed without a possibility of seeing me. I could see against the sky that it was a soldier, and I had the impression that it was a very ancient one. Ten yards short of me he crossed over the lane to my side and would have walked almost on top of me. I had to jump up and meet him, and the meeting was not a success from his point of view. I had been carrying, all the evening, a stout fencing stake which I had picked up

on the edge of the wood when I came out of it, and I swung this, not kindly, as I jumped. Then I ran. What I did was probably the most foolish thing a prisoner could do, for the assaulted sentry might have raised all the guards for miles round; but I was within a short walk of the frontier, which I had been trying for more than three years to get across, and the man's appearance was so sudden that I had no time to think.

I came out almost at once into open cornfields and settled down in the middle of one to review the situation.

It was getting late and I knew that I had no time to waste if I was to cross the railway and stream in full darkness. I knew also that I had come as far north as was safe and must watch the compass continually, no matter how much time I might lose thereby, to avoid crossing the stream beyond the angle of the frontier. I ought, if I was where I thought I was, to find the railway within about one kilometre. I was very thirsty, having had nothing to drink for more than twenty-four hours. Finally I had just added to the normal prisoner's desire to escape an excellent incentive to make no mistake this time. It was raining very heavily.

I came out of the corn and started off due west, and got a long drink from a puddle of fresh rain-water in the first track which I crossed. After a few hundred yards I saw a telegraph line against the sky in front of me and concluded that the railway ran beneath it. I stalked it cautiously and painfully on my stomach, only to find that the line crossed the middle of a cornfield and had no apparent connexion with any railway.

After another quarter of a mile or so exactly the same thing happened again. Those two telegraph lines lost me, between them, not less than half an hour. I had not yet found the railway and the first signs of dawn were showing in the east.

I went on again and in a few minutes came to a very



dense wood of closely planted fir-trees. I went straight into the wood and crashed steeply downhill into what I knew must be the valley of my stream at last. I made a lot of noise, but in that downpour of rain no one was likely to hear me unless within a few yards of me. It was as dark as pitch in the wood and once or twice I burst into and across paths and rides—very dangerous spots—before I realized what they were. About ten minutes after entering the wood I heard the roar of a train in front of me and quite close, and came almost at once to the top of a cutting through which the railway ran. After the darkness of the wood it seemed most alarmingly light and there was in fact very much more light than suited my purpose.

I lay down in some bushes at the top of the bank to listen for the coughs and other familiar night sounds of the German sentries, who were, I knew, posted on or near the railway. I had not waited many minutes when a number of rifle shots were fired in the woods somewhere behind me, and I heard men, presumably sentries, calling to one another up and down the railway in both directions. These shots were fired at a gang of Russians who, like those of the night before, had broken out of the mines and were running blindly towards the west. I saw three of them at the quarantine camp later in the day. About a dozen had broken out each time and several had been killed or wounded before they were through the wire of their compounds; the fate of the remainder was unknown, but the German had very little consideration for quite tame Russian soldiers and none at all for those who showed any sort of independence.

What I wanted to do was to locate two sentries definitely and then cross the line midway between them. After a time—and it was getting horribly lighter every minute—I saw a soldier coming along the line on my right, flashing an electric torch in the air, apparently

as a signal to some one in the woods above the cutting. On my left I could hear voices, but could not make out the speakers through the bushes in which I lay. The torch-bearer apparently met them—they were stationary—said a few words and started back the way he had come. At the same time I heard a dog whining and a man cursing it in the woods behind me, and decided that I had got to move without more delay.

Providentially I heard a train approaching at the very moment when I had got to my feet. I waited for it, ran down the side of the cutting as it came in sight and crossed the line under cover of its noise and smoke. I took a heavy toss over the first line of metals and a heavier one over the signal wires at the far side—they twanged like a hundred banjos—and flopped down in a bed of nettles at the top of the cutting without a challenge. I crawled to the edge of the nettles and found myself looking down on a wide and well-kept road along which at the moment a squad of weary soldiers was marching. I was worried, not by the soldiers, who could not possibly see me, but by the road which was where, according to my map, no road had any right to be. I got out the map and found to my relief that, if it showed no road running by the railway at the point where I thought I was, it showed none at any other point. I could only conclude that the road, like the mines and the railways which had worried me the night before, was newer than the map, assume that I was on the right line after all, and go straight ahead.

I had not much of a view from my nettles—they were very vicious nettles!—but could see, about a hundred yards ahead and beyond a slight rise in the ground, a long row of poplars which I thought must mark the stream. It was by now broad daylight, and there was no sort of cover by which I could approach the stream. It was out of the question to wander about between the



two guarded lines looking for a better approach, so I put my head down and sprinted for the poplars, feeling much more conspicuous than I liked. At the foot of the poplars I found, instead of a stream, a wire fence over which I blundered and continued the sprint until I landed, fifty yards farther on, in a small wood.

As I ran into the wood I cleared a small boggy stream. My map told me only that there would be a small stream; it did not tell me whether it would be one or ten yards wide, and I now rather unwisely assumed that I had crossed it and was in Holland. I went straight on through the wood, not at all cautiously, but the moment I got to the other side of it I saw, some seventy-five yards ahead, a double row of poplars with a gleam of water at their feet, and knew that here really was the frontier.

I could see no sentry, but there were groups of bushes all along the banks, any one of which might hide a man, so again I put down my head and sprinted for the nearest point of the stream. When I was ten yards from it a Landsturmer popped up on my left, bellowing, "Halt!" I jinked and took a header into the water. It took me seven strokes to cross and the German got his rifle off just as I got my hand on the far bank.

When I crawled out I knew I was in Holland.

As soon as I was out of the water I ran as if the devil were after me for a hamlet which I could see a few hundred yards ahead. I approached a woman who was just opening her cottage, but she only screamed and banged the door in my face. Next I met a fat farmer on a bicycle whom I stopped and to whom I explained the situation in halting German, asking him where I could find a soldier or policeman who would be good enough to arrest me, dry me, and feed me. He was quite friendly and said that if I kept straight on I should probably run into a patrol. At the first cross-road three Dutch soldiers jumped out of a ruined

cottage with rifles at the ready and called "Halt!" I told them I was an English officer, lately arrived from the Fatherland and in urgent need of food and dry clothing, and one of them conducted me to the guard-house in the village of Rimbürg. There I ate all that remained of the guards' rations of the day before and changed into the uniform of a Dutch private soldier while my clothes were being dried. The guard-house was at a road post actually on the frontier, the barrier was just in front of it, and on the other side of the barrier was a German sentry. I leant on the barrier and told the Hun my then unbiased opinion of him and his Fatherland and everything connected with it and gave him a note, in the worst possible taste, for the Commandant of the camp at Aachen.

When my clothes were dry an under-officer drove me some miles in a cab to a quarantine station, where exchanged British N.C.O.'s were disinfected on arrival from Germany. There I had a big meal, a shave, and a bath, and saw three of the Russian soldiers who had been the cause of the shooting the night before. The place seemed to be run by Englishwomen, who overwhelmed me with kindnesses.

In the evening a Dutch officer came and took me by train to Rotterdam, where we arrived at about 11 P.M. Unfortunately I had discarded my celluloid collar as soon as I was clear of the town of Aachen and had been unable to buy a new one at the quarantine camp, so, in my roughly dried blue suit, I looked a bit out of place in a first-class carriage. The officer took me to a good hotel and, after a few minutes' talk with the porter, said: "Your room is number so and so; I advise you to find your Consul-General to-morrow. You are free. Good night."

MAJOR C. C. HARRISON AND CAPTAIN H. A. CARTWRIGHT  
*Within Four Walls*



## THE ESCAPE OF THE TUNNELLERS

This is the story of how a mass escape of British prisoners from a German camp in the Great War was assisted by officers and men who themselves took no part in the dash for freedom.

A group of officers (known as the working-party) had dug an immense tunnel from the cellars of one of the houses in the Holzminden Camp. This tunnel was sixty yards in length, and took nine months to excavate. It extended from beneath the orderlies' quarters in Kaserne B of the camp to the edge of a field of rye well outside the prison walls.

As the entrance to the tunnel could only be reached through the orderlies' quarters, and all the escapers were officers, it was necessary to arrange for a secret passage between the officers' and orderlies' parts of the building. These parts adjoined, but were shut off from each other. A hole was therefore cut in the wall of one of the top rooms, and skilfully covered up with a piece of board camouflaged to represent plaster. Through this hole the escapers were to make their way into the orderlies' department, and thence to the tunnel entrance.

The arrangement was that the thirteen officers who had taken the chief part in digging the tunnel should escape first. A supplementary working-party, consisting of those who had helped in various ways, was to follow, and then a number of others who knew of the tunnel and wished to use it.

The organization of the actual escape of so large a number was obviously no easy task. Captain Durnford, the Camp Adjutant, undertook the arrangements.

It is Captain Durnford himself who tells the story.

**I**T was arranged that the original working-party should have a clear hour's start, and that another hour should intervene between the last man out of the supplementary working-party and "the ruck."

"The ruck"—or, in other words, anyone else who wanted to go—had by now assumed alarming dimensions. There were some sixty names on the official list handed to me as Camp Adjutant on the day preceding the escape. The list had been arranged in order of

priority of exit, and to prevent heartburnings—as well as to promote the maximum of secrecy—it was arranged that those on the list should only be warned in the first instance *after* the evening *appel* (roll-call) on the night of the actual escape. Moreover, no one was to be told his place, but only that he was to lie in bed fully dressed until he was actually warned to go, upon which he was to get up at once and repair to the rendezvous on the attic floor. This was a very wise precaution. It excluded the possibility of anyone in A Kaserne getting wind of the intention to flit and then endeavouring to get into the other barrack for the night and so endangering the success of the enterprise. It also precluded the risk of excessive human circulation in the corridors, the only people authorized to move about in the corridors being myself, Lieutenant Grieve, who was selected as traffic controller, one or two look-out men, and each escaper as, in his proper turn, he left his bed to pass to the tunnel.

The orderlies had been thoroughly warned, and those of them who had volunteered to help fully understood their duties. One was to receive officers one by one on the other side of the hole in the attic room and was to signal the next man to come through when the coast was clear. Another was to guide officers to the tunnel entrance down the staircase and through the planks, and two more were to be on duty at the actual tunnel entrance. Traffic was to be carefully controlled. Not more than two officers were to be allowed inside the orderlies' quarters at a time. If there was a hitch, Lieutenant Grieve, on the far side of the attic hole, was to be immediately warned. On discovery all the orderlies were to pretend complete ignorance of the whole business.

This last goes without saying. Just as the loyal co-operation of the orderlies was essential to success, so it



was imperative that none of them should be implicated. They had all been offered a starting-place if they cared to accept one, but none of them did. The long-expected, almost despaired of, head-for-head exchange had at last been arranged at the Hague, and the agreement was now only awaiting ratification. The fact that privates had been up till now excluded from the terms of the exchange had of course been very severely criticized, and it was not until later realized that the arrangements for a general head-for-head repatriation had been frustrated entirely from the German side. But the rule of "women and children first"—as our orderlies, half good-naturedly, half cynically, and with that wonderful instinct for the epigrammatic which characterizes the British soldier, had summarized the situation—was now obsolete. To have imperilled their chances of exchange by taking a long risk at this stage of their captivity (nearly all of them were 1914 prisoners) would have been very unwise, even had they been as well equipped as the officers as regards disguise, money, reserves of food, and general experience. Moreover, the penalties for attempted escape were for private soldiers infinitely more severe than they were for officers. They would have certainly been sent back to one of the men's *Lagers*, and their previous experiences reminded them that any officers' *Lager*—even Holzminden—was considerably better than the former's best. And there were always the coal and salt mines to be taken into calculation. So they stayed behind, and their share in the night's work amply crowned their long record of ungrudged service and devotion to the cause. . . .

The actual night of the escape was the 24th July.

I was warned just before evening *appel*, at six o'clock, that if B house harboured no aliens that night, the escape would take place. I got hold of Grieve during

the evening and we held a long confabulation as to how the policing had best be done. It was arranged that I should do all the warning and escort people to the rendezvous in the attic, and that he should do the actual controlling and keep in communication with the orderlies. The evening passed away and I don't think anybody outside the working-party was aware that anything was actually in the wind.

The doors in B house were safely locked at 9.0 P.M. without a single intruder from A house. Several people had been keenly on the watch to see to this point. We went off quietly to our respective rooms to have our names called.

After the Feldwebel and his minions had finally left the building there was still another hour or so to wait before the coast was clear for action. A German sentry used to come round some time after ten o'clock to close all the windows in the corridors and incidentally remove anything that he saw to his liking which might be lying about. Until he had gone it would be unsafe to have any undue movement, and only the cutting-out man—*i.e.*, the first officer to go through the tunnel—and the two next on the list would go down to the chamber before he was well clear.

During this period of waiting the senior British officer paid me a visit in his dressing-gown and said good-bye. I wished him good luck. We had worked together for two months or more and had discussed the tunnel and his particular plan to escape countless times. He had a very good disguise and, without wishing to disparage his features, they were—with the aid of glasses—wonderfully Teutonic. He was, so far as I knew, the only one who was proposing to travel all the way to the frontier by train, and with his excellent knowledge of German and forged papers he looked to have a very good chance.



I sat in my room until the outside door had slammed behind the German sentry and I knew the working-party would have already begun making their way through the tunnel for the last time. Then I began going round the rooms and warning personally every man on the list. They were to get their kit ready and get into bed fully dressed and then wait until they were called. There was to be no movement in the corridors of any sort. For all the secrecy that had been attempted, they were most of them more than half expecting the long-deferred call. Probably some one had seen a member of the working-party in his disguise and had passed on the information. A few of them wanted to know where they were in the list, but I told them that they were not to know and had only to obey orders. Every one would have to come upstairs in his socks, carrying his boots in his hand. After I had completed the task of warning everybody I went up to see Grieve. It was now past half-past eleven. He told me that the working-party were all well away already and that the thing was going well.

The hour's law for the working-party was strictly adhered to, and at 12.30 the supplementary working-party began to go through. They, too, were all through by about 1.15.

At 1.10 or thereabouts I began my duties of assembling those on the waiting list. Two or three passed through all right, and then the orderly on the orderlies' side of the attic hole passed the word back that there was a hitch. He would let Grieve know when it was all clear again.

The next man due to go through had overweighted himself and his pack to such an extent that the delay proved perhaps a blessing in disguise. If we had let him go through as he was, he would probably have stuck in the tunnel, would most certainly not have forded the Weser, and could, in any case, not have

marched for more than three days. We sent him back with some stern advice to remove a dozen tins or so from his pack, discard his stick, and take off his hob-nailed boots which had made an infernal clatter in the passage. A few more such performers and the secret would be out!

No news came through from the tunnel, so I decided to turn in for an hour or so, and Grieve arranged for a message to be sent to me if the coast was clear before that time.

I took a turn up and down the corridors before I lay down. There were the sentries outside walking up and down, with their chins sunk on their breasts and their rifles slung on their backs, wonderfully as usual. It was odd to think that within a hundred yards our fellows were wriggling away through the rye. Clearly nothing had been suspected so far. It was a calm night and fairly dark.

I lay down knowing that there would be heaps of work to do next day, whatever happened, and that I should want my wits about me. But I could not sleep, and at about 2.30 I went upstairs to see Grieve again. He reported there was no change in the position. We tried to get an answer from the orderlies' quarters, but there was no reply. It was rather baffling. At three o'clock we held a council of war with Captain Sharp, who was one of those due to go through early in the list, and we agreed—although it was against the instructions given us, which had been that the orderlies should alone be responsible for letting anyone through the attic hole—that Sharp should go through to reconnoitre. He did so, and came back in about a quarter of an hour's time to report that no one was about, and that the tunnel was empty. (It was later discovered that one of the working-party had told the orderlies to close down for the night, in the dishonourable desire to get a clearer field of escape for himself.)

It was rather a nasty moment. We had a sudden new suspicion of insecurity and a feeling that valuable time



might have been lost. It now wanted about two hours to dawn, and so far we reckoned that only 24 were out of the camp. It did not look very promising for most of the waiting list.

In the absence of the orderlies—we hardly felt justified in giving them further orders—we sent through the next five officers on the waiting list, headed by Sharp, allowing five minutes between each. They did not return, so we concluded that the tunnel was still clear and that they had got away, thus bringing the total number to 29. About half a dozen more had followed at regular intervals, and it was getting on for half-past four when the last—Captain Gardiner of the A.I.F.—came back to report that the tunnel was blocked and passage impossible. According to his report the tunnel was reverberating with groans, curses, and expressions of encouragement. Some one apparently was stuck in front and was urging those behind him to get back in order to let him out. Those behind, on the other hand, like the Tuscans in the famous Lay, were crying "Forward" in no uncertain tones, and urging him to get out and on with it. It had clearly become a hopeless impasse. It seemed best, therefore, at this juncture to call a halt and clear the course before daylight, so as to defer the chance of discovery till the last possible moment. Recommendations were therefore passed along to evacuate the tunnel.

But here arose another difficulty. Those now labouring in the tunnel were not used to its ways. It was hard enough to wriggle along in a forward direction, but withdrawal, with a heavy pack in tow, was an even more strenuous proposition. It will be remembered that the working-party, with muscles attuned by long practice, had experienced the utmost difficulty in pulling out the sacks of earth when the rope method broke down. And to get the packs out was an absolute

necessity, for otherwise there would be a complete block both before and behind, which would result in the foremost unfortunates being entombed until the tunnel was discovered and they were dug out.

The situation called for desperate measures, and fortunately the right man was at hand. A New Zealand officer called Garland, who was high up on the waiting list, came up to the rendezvous to prospect. He happened to be about as strong physically as any other two officers in the camp, and possessed the biceps of a Hercules. He at once volunteered to go down and try to pull out the rear-most man.

After about half an hour he succeeded in doing so, and the two collaborators in this severe physical exercise crawled back through the attic hole completely exhausted and dripping with sweat.

There still remained four men stuck in the tunnel, it was already getting light, and in an hour and a half—at 6 A.M.—a German N.C.O. was due to open the outside door and call the orderlies. It was essential, therefore, to get every one back into the building before that time. If the alarm of the escape was not raised before nine o'clock *appel*, the 29 fugitives now at large would have all the better opportunity of making cover some distance away from the camp before they lay up for their first day out.

An hour past, a look-out from an upper window at the end of one of the corridors had reported that two figures had been seen in the dim half light of the dawn making off through the rye field. It was guessed that these would probably be the last pair out before the accident had happened in the tunnel which had barred further passage. If this couple could gain the Duke of Brunswick's hunting woods—some three miles distant—before the hue and cry was out, they could lie up snugly and safely, and their predecessors would be in all the better plight.



The work of extracting the remaining four went on slowly and laboriously, and by a quarter to six two more mud-stained objects had been salved and had been sent back, cursing bitterly, to their rooms to get rid of their mud and cover their traces. It appeared that the tunnel had caved in about five-sixths of the way up—at the bottom of the slope up to the final exit. Stones loosened in the traffic had found their way to this—the lowest point in the whole tunnel, and were blocking further progress. A landslip on the most modest scale would be quite enough to block up the tiny hole.

There was now nothing left to do. The two officers still in the tunnel with the volunteers assisting them to get out would have to be left to take their chance. Everybody else went back to their rooms and to bed, hugging themselves in anticipation of the nine o'clock *appel*, and the fireworks which would inevitably ensue when the Feldwebel (N.C.O.) of B house reported with a rueful countenance that according to his reckoning there 'failed' (*fehlen*) no less than twenty-nine *Herren*.

This hope was, however, frustrated, and the bubble burst two hours too soon. The last two men in the tunnel were eventually retrieved, and emerged from the plank entrance with their rescuers to find the door at the orderlies' entrance open. The under-officer had duly called the orderlies some twenty minutes previously and had gone away suspecting nothing. Their obvious course was to obey instructions and go back to their house by the same way as they had come. But for some reason they failed to do so and ran out very foolishly into the cookhouse in the enclosure, where they met Niemeyer<sup>1</sup> out for an inopportune morning stroll. Their salvage party meanwhile had gone back by the proper way.

In ten minutes the whole of the camp staff had

<sup>1</sup> The Camp Commandant

appeared on the scene. The two officers, of course, refused to say anything or to explain their muddy condition. Even then Niemeyer failed to tumble to what had actually occurred. But a few minutes later an excited farmer appeared at the postern gate and led the whole party to where, amid the trampled rye in which a dozen different tracks were visible from the camp windows, a gaping hole brought recognition and late wisdom to Milwaukee Bill.

*"So, ein Tunnel."*

Tunnel. The same dangerous word, common to either language, which had been whispered for so long by the one side, now ran like electricity through the ranks of the other.

The next question from Niemeyer's point of view was, how many? The fat Feldwebel went off and counted an expectant house. He found everybody unusually wide awake and good-humoured for that hour of the morning. The fat Feldwebel was himself thoroughly amused by the eventful happenings since his last appearance in the house, and he merely chortled good-humouredly as name after name elicited no response. He returned to the rye field to report to Niemeyer an absentee list of 26. In his excitement he had forgotten to count the "Munshi's" room, from which all three occupants had flitted.

Then came the real moment. Niemeyer's jaw dropped, his moustachios for a brief instant lost their twirl, his solid stomach swelled less impressively against his overcoat. Just for a moment he became grey and looked very old. But only for a moment. The sound of laughter in the upper corridor windows floated down to him and roused action and the devil in him forthwith. As an initial measure he put all the windows at that end of the building out of bounds and told his sentries to fire at once if a face appeared. Then he had the



outer doors of both houses locked. Then he placed a sentry over the tunnel head and stalked away to the Kommandantur to ring up the Company Captain in Holzminden, inform the police, report events to Corps Headquarters at Hanover, and issue emergency orders "for the safety of the camp."

These were posted up in both houses and caused considerable amusement. Briefly, they permitted the officers remaining in the camp to eat, sleep, and breathe, but that was about all. "No one," so ran the order, "when inside the building was to move from his own room. Conversation with other officers in the corridors or by the notice-boards was forbidden. Officers were not allowed to stand about at the doors of the buildings. No officer belonging to one house might enter the other. Officers were not to walk about in groups of more than two."

Of course we had amply expected all this. Indeed, there was ground for congratulation that things had panned out up to the present without murder being done. Stringent orders had been issued that, in the event of the escape only being discovered at the nine o'clock *appel*, there was to be no laughter or demonstration calculated to aggravate. Months before, the more serious-minded had discussed the prospects of some one being shot in the Commandant's first wild ebullition of fury and baffled rage at the defeat of all his precautions. It was one advantage of the premature discovery of the escape that what shooting was ordered was confined to the windows.

Twenty-nine. The magic number flitted from mouth to mouth and was shouted across from B house to A, who cheered heartily on hearing the figure. It was indeed a good number and constituted an easy record for Germany, if not for all time.

H. G. DURNFORD, *The Tunnellers of Holzminden*

# HIGH COURAGE

## INTO THE ENEMY'S LINES

Charles Lever's most famous novel, *Charles O'Malley*, deals with the life of an Irish officer during the Napoleonic Wars.

The extract which we give here tells how Charles O'Malley (who relates the story) sets out one night on a daring manœuvre, accompanied by his man, Mike, and a companion, Hampden. The English troop to which they belong is acting as an observation corps upon the movements of the French, who are besieging the Spanish town of Ciudad Rodrigo. O'Malley had noticed the French engineers marking out a new entrenchment with white tape. He conceives the scheme of riding out under cover of darkness and moving the tape nearer to the town so as to bring the entrenchment within easy range of Spanish fire.

THE small twinkling lights which shone from the ramparts of Ciudad Rodrigo were our only guide as we issued forth upon our perilous expedition. The storm raged, if possible, even more violently than before; and gusts of wind swept along the ground with the force of a hurricane; so that, at first, our horses could scarcely face the tempest. Our path lay along the little stream for a considerable way; after which, fording the rivulet, we entered upon the open plain; taking care to avoid the French outpost in the extreme left, which was marked by a bivouac fire, burning under the heavy downpour of rain, and looking larger through the dim atmosphere around it.

I rode foremost, followed closely by Hampden and Mike; not a word was spoken after we crossed the stream. Our plan was, if challenged by a patrol, to reply in French and press on; so small a party could never suggest the idea of attack; and we hoped in this manner to escape.

The violence of the storm was such that many of our precautions as to silence were quite unnecessary; and we had advanced to a considerable extent into



the plain before any appearance of the encampment struck us. At length, on mounting a little rising ground, we perceived several fires, stretching far away to the northward; while, still to our left, there blazed one larger and brighter than the others. We now found that we had not outflanked their position as we intended, and learning, from the situation of the fires, that we were still only at the outposts, we pressed sharply forward, directing our course by the twin stars that shone from the fortress.

"How heavy the ground is here!" whispered Hampden, as our horses sank above the fetlock; "we had better stretch away to the right, the rise of the hill will favour us."

"Hark!" said I, "did you not hear something? Pull up; silence now; yes, there they come. It's a patrol, I hear their tramp." As I spoke, the measured tread of infantry was heard above the storm, and soon after a lantern was seen coming along the causeway near us. The column passed within a few yards of where we stood. I could even recognize the black covering of the shakos as the light fell on them. "Let us follow them," whispered I; and the next moment we fell in upon their track, holding our cattle well in hand, and ready to start at a moment.

"*Qui va là?*" a sentry demanded.

"*La deuxième division,*" cried a hoarse voice.

"*Halte là! la consigne?*"

"*Wagram!*" repeated the same voice as before, while his party resumed their march; and the next moment the patrol was again upon his post, silent and motionless as before.

"*En avant, messieurs!*" said I aloud, as soon as the infantry had proceeded some distance; "*en avant!*"

"*Qui va là?*" demanded the sentry, as we came along at a sharp trot.

"*L'état-major, Wagram,*" responded I, pressing on

without drawing rein; and in a moment we had regained our former position behind the infantry. We had scarcely time to congratulate ourselves upon the success of our scheme, when a tremendous clattering noise in front, mingled with the galloping of horses and the creaking of whips, announced the approach of the artillery as they came along by a narrow road which bisected our path; and, as they passed between us and the column, we could hear the muttered sentences of the drivers, cursing the unseasonable time for an attack, and swearing at their cattle in no measured tones.

"Did you hear that?" whispered Hampden; "the battery is about to be directed against the San Benito, which must be far away to the left. I heard one of the troop saying that they were to open their fire at day-break."

"All right now," said I, "look there!"

From the hill we now stood upon, a range of lanterns was distinctly visible, stretching away for nearly half a mile.

"There are the trenches; they must be at work, too; see how the lights are moving from place to place! Straight now: forward!"

So saying, I pressed my horse boldly on.

We had not proceeded many minutes, when the sounds of galloping were heard coming along behind us.

"To the right, in the hollow," cried I; "be still."

Scarcely had we moved off when several horsemen galloped up, and, drawing their reins to breathe their horses up the hill, we could hear their voices as they conversed together.

In the few broken words we could catch we guessed that the attack upon San Benito was only a feint to induce Crawford to hold his position, while the French, marching upon his flank and front, were to attack him with overwhelming masses and crush him.



"You hear what's in store for us, O'Malley," whispered Hampden. "I think we could not possibly do better than hasten back with the intelligence."

"We must not forget what we came for, first," said I; and the next moment we were following the horsemen, who, from their helmets, seemed horse-artillery officers.

The pace our guides rode at showed us that they knew their ground. We passed several sentries, muttering something at each time, and seeming as if only anxious to keep up with our party.

"They've halted," said I. "Now to the left, there; gently here, for we must be in the midst of their lines. Ha! I knew we were right; see there!"

Before us, now, at a few hundred yards, we could perceive a number of men engaged upon the field. Lights were moving from place to place rapidly, while immediately in front a strong picket of cavalry were halted.

"By Jove, there's sharp work of it to-night!" whispered Hampden; "they do intend to surprise us to-morrow."

"Gently now, to the left," said I, as, cautiously skirting the little hill, I kept my eye firmly fixed upon the watch-fire.

The storm, which for some time had abated considerably, was now nearly quelled, and the moon again peeped forth amid masses of black and watery clouds.

"What good fortune for us!" thought I, at this moment, as I surveyed the plain before me.

"I say, O'Malley, what are those fellows at yonder, where the blue light is burning?"

"Ah! the very people we want; these are the sappers. Now for it! that's our ground; we'll soon come upon their track now."

We pressed rapidly forward, passing an infantry party as we went. The blue light was scarcely a hundred

yards off: we could even hear the shouting of the officers to their men in the trenches, when suddenly my horse came down upon his head, and rolling over, crushed me to the earth.

"Not hurt, my boy," cried I, in a subdued tone, as Hampden jumped down beside me.

It was the angle of a trench I had fallen into; and although both my horse and myself felt stunned for the moment, we rallied the next minute.

"Here is the very spot," said I. "Now, Mike, catch the bridles and follow us closely."

Guiding ourselves along the edge of the trench, we crept stealthily forward; the only watch-fire near was where the engineer party was halted, and our object was to get outside of this.

"My turn this time," said Hampden, as he tripped suddenly, and fell head foremost upon the grass.

As I assisted him to rise something caught my ankle, and, on stooping, I found it was a cord pegged fast into the ground and lying only a few inches above it.

"Now, steady! see here; this is their working line; pass your hand along it there, and let us follow it out."

While Hampden accordingly crept along on one side, I tracked the cord upon the other; here I found it terminating upon a small mound, where probably some battery was to be erected. I accordingly gathered it carefully up, and was returning towards my friend, when what was my horror to hear Mike's voice, conversing, as it seemed to me, with some one in French.

I stood fixed to the spot, my very heart beating almost in my mouth as I listened.

"*Qui êtes-vous donc, mon ami?*" inquired a hoarse, deep voice, a few yards off.

"*Bon cheval, bon beast, sacré nom de Dieu!*" A hearty burst of laughter prevented my hearing the conclusion of Mike's French.



I now crept forward upon my hands and knees till I could catch the dark outline of the horses, one hand fixed upon my pistol trigger, and my sword drawn in the other. Meanwhile the dialogue continued.

"*Vous êtes d'Alsace—n'est-ce pas?*" asked the Frenchman, kindly supposing that Mike's French savoured of Strasbourg.

"Oh, blessed Virgin! av I might shoot him," was the muttered reply.

Before I had time to see the effect of the last speech I pressed forward with a bold spring, and felled the Frenchman to the earth; my hand had scarcely pressed upon his mouth, when Hampden was beside me. Snatching up the pistol I let fall, he held it to the man's chest, and commanded him to be silent. To unfasten his girdle and bind the Frenchman's hands behind him was the work of a moment; and, as the sharp click of the pistol-cock seemed to calm his efforts to escape, we soon succeeded in fastening a handkerchief tight across his mouth, and, the next minute, he was placed behind Mike's saddle, firmly attached to this worthy individual by his sword-belt.

"Now a clear run home for it, and a fair start," said Hampden, as he sprang into the saddle.

"Now, then, for it," I replied, as, turning my horse's head towards our lines, I dashed madly forward.

The moon was again obscured, but still the dark outline of the hill which formed our encampment was discernible on the horizon. Riding side by side, on we hurried; now splashing through the deep and wet marshes, now plunging through small streams. Our horses were high in mettle, and we spared them not; by taking a wide detour we had outflanked the French pickets, and were almost out of all risk, when, suddenly, on coming to the verge of a rather steep hill, we perceived beneath us a strong cavalry picket standing

around a watch-fire; their horses were ready saddled, the men accoutred, and quite prepared for the field. While we conversed together in whispers as to the course to follow, our deliberations were very rapidly cut short. The French prisoner, who hitherto had given neither trouble nor resistance, had managed to free his mouth from the encumbrance of the handkerchief; and, as we stood quietly discussing our plans, with one tremendous effort he endeavoured to hurl himself and Mike from the saddle, shouting out as he did so:

*"A moi, camarades! sauvez moi!"*

Hampden's pistol leaped from the holster as he spoke, and, levelling it with a deadly aim, he pulled the trigger; but I threw up his arm, and the ball passed high above his head. To have killed the Frenchman would have been to lose my faithful follower, who struggled manfully with his adversary, and, at length, by throwing himself flatly forward upon the mane of his horse, completely disabled him. Meanwhile, the picket had sprung to their saddles, and looked wildly about on every side.

Not a moment to be lost; so, turning our horses' heads towards the plain, away we went. One loud cheer announced to us that we had been seen, and the next instant the clash of the pursuing cavalry was heard behind us. It was now entirely a question of speed, and little need we have feared, had Mike's horse not been doubly weighted. However, as we still had considerably the start, and the grey dawn of day enabled us to see the ground, the odds were in our favour. "Never let your horse's head go," was my often repeated direction to Mike, as he spurred with all the desperation of madness. Already the low meadow-land was in sight which flanked the stream we had crossed in the morning; but, unfortunately, the heavy rains had swollen it now to a considerable depth, and the muddy current, choked with branches of trees and great stones, was



hurrying down like a torrent. "Take the river: never flinch it!" was my cry to my companions, as I turned my head and saw a French dragoon, followed by two others, gaining rapidly upon us. As I spoke, Mike dashed in, followed by Hampden, and at the same moment the sharp ring of a carbine whizzed past me. To take off the pursuit from the others, I now wheeled my horse suddenly round, as if I feared to take the stream, and dashed along by the river's bank.

Beneath me, in the foaming current, the two horse-men laboured; now stemming the rush of water, now reeling almost beneath. A sharp cry burst from Mike as I looked; and I saw the poor fellow bend nearly to his saddle. I could see no more, for the chase was now hot upon myself; behind me rode a French dragoon, his carbine pressed tightly to his side, ready to fire as he pressed on in pursuit. I had but one chance; so, drawing my pistol, I wheeled suddenly in my saddle and fired straight at him. The Frenchman fell, while a regular volley from his party rang around me; one ball striking my horse, and another lodging in the pommel of my saddle. The noble animal reeled nearly to the earth, but, as if rallying for a last effort, sprang forward with renewed energy and plunged boldly into the river.

For a moment, so sudden was my leap, my pursuers lost sight of me; but the bank being somewhat steep, the efforts of my horse to climb again discovered me, and before I reached the field, two pistol-balls took effect upon me: one slightly grazed my side, but my bridle arm was broken by the other, and my hand fell motionless to my side. A cheer of defiance was, however, my reply as I turned round in my saddle, and the next moment I was far beyond the range of their fire.

CHARLES LEVER, *Charles O'Malley*

## A FIGHT WITH THE SEA

In the following extract from a great novel the narrator is David Copperfield. The fisherman Ham Peggotty is a friend of his childhood days.

**T**HERE was a dark gloom in my solitary chamber, when I at length returned to it; but I was tired now, and, getting into bed again, fell—off a tower and down a precipice—into the depths of sleep. I have an impression that for a long time, though I dreamed of being elsewhere and in a variety of scenes, it was always blowing in my dream. At length I lost that feeble hold upon reality, and was engaged with two dear friends, but who they were I don't know, at the siege of some town in a roar of cannonading.

The thunder of the cannon was so loud and incessant, that I could not hear something I much desired to hear, until I made a great exertion and awoke. It was broad day—eight or nine o'clock; the storm raging, in lieu of the batteries; and some one knocking and calling at my door.

"What is the matter?" I cried.

"A wreck! Close by!"

I sprung out of bed, and asked, what wreck.

"A schooner, from Spain or Portugal, laden with fruit and wine. Make haste, Sir, if you want to see her! It's thought, down on the beach, she'll go to pieces every moment."

The excited voice went clamouring along the staircase; and I wrapped myself in my clothes as quickly as I could, and ran into the street.

Numbers of people were there before me, all running in one direction, to the beach. I ran the same way,



outstripping a good many, and soon came facing the wild sea.

The wind might by this time have lulled a little, though not more sensibly than if the cannonading I had dreamed of had been diminished by the silencing of half a dozen guns out of hundreds. But the sea, having upon it the additional agitation of the whole night, was infinitely more terrific than when I had seen it last. Every appearance it had then presented bore the expression of being *swelled*; and the height to which the breakers rose, and, looking over one another, bore one another down, and rolled in, in interminable hosts, was most appalling.

In the difficulty of hearing anything but wind and waves, and in the crowd, and the unspeakable confusion, and my first breathless efforts to stand against the weather, I was so confused that I looked out to sea for the wreck, and saw nothing but the foaming heads of the great waves. A half-dressed boatman, standing next me, pointed with his bare arm (a tattoo'd arrow on it, pointing in the same direction) to the left. Then, O great Heaven, I saw it, close in upon us!

One mast was broken short off, six or eight feet from the deck, and lay over the side, entangled in a maze of sail and rigging; and all that ruin, as the ship rolled and beat—which she did without a moment's pause, and with a violence quite inconceivable—beat the side as if it would stave it in. Some efforts were even then being made to cut this portion of the wreck away; for as the ship, which was broadside on, turned towards us in her rolling, I plainly descried her people at work with axes, especially one active figure with long curling hair, conspicuous among the rest. But a great cry, which was audible even above the wind and water, rose from the shore at this moment; the sea, sweeping over the rolling wreck, made a clean breach, and carried men,

spars, casks, planks, bulwarks, heaps of such toys, into the boiling surge.

The second mast was yet standing, with the rags of a rent sail, and a wild confusion of broken cordage flapping to and fro. The ship had struck once, the same boatman hoarsely said in my ear, and then lifted in and struck again. I understood him to add that she was parting amidships, and I could readily suppose so, for the rolling and beating were too tremendous for any human work to suffer long. As he spoke, there was another great cry of pity from the beach; four men arose with the wreck out of the deep, clinging to the rigging of the remaining mast; uppermost, the active figure with the curling hair.

There was a bell on board; and as the ship rolled and dashed, like a desperate creature driven mad, now showing us the whole sweep of her deck, as she turned on her beam ends towards the shore, now nothing but her keel, as she sprung wildly over and turned towards the sea, the bell rang; and its sound, the knell of those unhappy men, was borne towards us on the wind. Again we lost her, and again she rose. Two men were gone. The agony on shore increased. Men groaned, and clasped their hands; women shrieked, and turned away their faces. Some ran wildly up and down along the beach, crying for help where no help could be. I found myself one of these, frantically imploring a knot of sailors whom I knew, not to let those two lost creatures perish before our eyes.

They were making out to me, in an agitated way—I don't know how, for the little I could hear I was scarcely composed enough to understand—that the life-boat had been bravely manned an hour ago, and could do nothing; and that as no man would be so desperate as to attempt to wade off with a rope, and establish a communication with the shore, there was nothing left



to try; when I noticed that some new sensation moved the people on the beach, and saw them part, and Ham come breaking through them to the front.

I ran to him—as well as I know—to repeat my appeal for help. But, distracted though I was, by a sight so new to me and terrible, the determination in his face, and his look, out to sea—exactly the same look as I remembered in connexion with the morning after Emily's flight—awoke me to a knowledge of his danger. I held him back with both arms; and implored the men with whom I had been speaking not to listen to him, not to do murder, not to let him stir from off that sand!

Another cry arose on shore; and looking to the wreck, we saw the cruel sail, with blow on blow, beat off the lower of the two men, and fly up in triumph round the active figure left alone upon the mast.

Against such a sight, and against such determination as that of the calmly desperate man who was already accustomed to lead half the people present, I might as hopefully have entreated the wind. "Mas'r Davy," he said, cheerily grasping me by both hands, "if my time is come, 'tis come. If 'tan't, I'll bide it. Lord above bless you, and bless all! Mates, make me ready! I'm a-going off!"

I was swept away, but not unkindly, to some distance, where the people around me made me stay; urging, as I confusedly perceived, that he was bent on going, with help or without, and that I should endanger the precautions for his safety by troubling those with whom they rested. I don't know what I answered or what they rejoined; but I saw hurry on the beach, and men running with ropes from a capstan that was there, and penetrating into a circle of figures that hid him from me. Then I saw him standing alone, in a seaman's frock and trousers: a rope in his hand, or slung to his wrist: another round his body: and several of the best men

holding, at a little distance, to the latter, which he laid out himself, slack upon the shore, at his feet.

The wreck, even to my unpractised eye, was breaking up. I saw that she was parting in the middle, and that the life of the solitary man upon the mast hung by a thread. Still he clung to it. He had a singular red cap on—not like a sailor's cap, but of a finer colour; and as the few yielding planks between him and destruction rolled and bulged, and his anticipative death-knell rang, he was seen by all of us to wave it. I saw him do it now, and thought I was going distracted, when his action brought an old remembrance to my mind of a once dear friend.

Ham watched the sea, standing alone, with the silence of suspended breath behind him, and the storm before, until there was a great retiring wave, when, with a backward glance at those who held the rope which was made fast round his body, he dashed in after it, and in a moment was buffeting with the water; rising with the hills, falling with the valleys, lost beneath the foam; then drawn again to land. They hauled in hastily.

He was hurt. I saw blood on his face, from where I stood; but he took no thought of that. He seemed hurriedly to give them some directions for leaving him more free—or so I judged from the motion of his arm—and was gone as before.

And now he made for the wreck, rising with the hills, falling with the valleys, lost beneath the rugged foam, borne in towards the shore, borne on towards the ship, striving hard and valiantly. The distance was nothing, but the power of the sea and wind made the strife deadly. At length he neared the wreck. He was so near that with one more of his vigorous strokes he would be clinging to it—when a high, green, vast hill-side of water, moving on shoreward, from beyond the



ship, he seemed to leap up into it with a mighty bound, and the ship was gone!

Some eddying fragments I saw in the sea, as if a mere cask had been broken, in running to the spot where they were hauling in. Consternation was in every face. They drew him to my very feet—insensible—dead. He was carried to the nearest house; and, no one preventing me now, I remained near him, busy, while every means of restoration were tried; but he had been beaten to death by the great wave, and his generous heart was stilled for ever.

CHARLES DICKENS, *David Copperfield*

## ADVENTURE IN THE ANTARCTIC

Lieutenant Evans (now Admiral Evans) was one of the party which accompanied Captain Scott on his South Pole expedition in 1910. The ill-fated five who made the actual journey to the Pole, and died on the way back, were accompanied by several supporting parties whose job was to leave food depots at various points *en route* for the five on their return. Each of these parties in turn went back to the base after arranging its depot.

The last supporting party consisted of Evans and two companions, Chief Stoker Lashly and Petty Officer Crean. On their way back they suffered great hardships, their progress being greatly hindered by huge crevasses in the ice along which their route lay. Instead of being able to move steadily forwards they found themselves compelled to travel to and fro across their line of advance, in order to get round the great gaps in the surface.

One evening, after they had made a perilous journey across a narrow ridge stretching between two immense gulfs, they felt utterly exhausted and almost in despair. They could not go on for long travelling in this fashion. Evans decided to go ahead on his own to look for a way out. He succeeded in finding one, and thus helped to save his companions. Then he himself fell sick, and it fell to Lashly and Crean to save their leader.

Admiral Evans tells the story of this adventurous journey in a chapter of his book *South with Scott*. We take up the tale here at the point where the three are on the verge of collapsing after their terrible journey across the ridge.

**T**HE three of us sat on the sledge—hollow-eyed and gaunt-looking. We were done, our throats were dry, and we could scarcely speak. There was no wind, the atmosphere was perfectly still, and the sun slowly crept towards the southern meridian, clear cut in the steel-blue sky. It gave us all the sympathy it could, for it shed warm rays upon us as it silently moved on its way like a great eye from Heaven, looking but unable to help.

We should have gone mad with another day like this,



and there were times when we came perilously close to being insane. Something had got to be done. I got up from the sledge, cast my harness adrift, and said, "I am going to look for a way out; we can't go on." My companions at first persuaded me not to go, but I pointed out that we could not continue in our exhausted condition. If only we could find a camping place, and we could rest, perhaps we should be able to make a final effort to get clear.

I moved along a series of ice bridges, and the excitement gave me strength once more. I was surprised at myself for not being more giddy when I walked along the narrow ice spines, but the crampons attached to my finneskoe were like cat's claws, and without the weight of the sledge I seemed to develop a panther-like tenacity, for I negotiated the dangerous parts with the utmost ease. After some twenty minutes hunting round I came to a great ice hollow.

Down into it I went and up the other side. This hollow was free from crevasses, and when I got to the top of the ice mound opposite I saw yet another hollow. Turning round I gazed back towards where I had left our sledge. Two tiny, disconsolate figures were silhouetted against the sunlight—my two companions on our great homeward march, one sitting and one standing, probably looking for my reappearance as I vanished and was sighted again from time to time. I felt a tremendous love for those two men that day. They had trusted me so implicitly and believed in my ability to win through. I turned northward again, stepped down into the next hollow and stopped. I was in an enormous depression, but not a crevasse to be seen, for the sides of the depression met quite firmly at the bottom in smooth, blue, solid ice.

In a flash I called to mind the view of the Ice Fall from the glacier on our outward journey with Captain

Scott; I remembered the huge frozen waves, and hoped with all my optimistic nature that this might be the end of the great disturbance. I stood still and surveyed the wonderful valley of ice, and then fell on my knees and prayed to God that a way out would be shown me.

Then I sprang to my feet, and hurried on boldly. Clambering up the opposite slope of ice, I found a smooth, round crest over which I ran into a similar valley beyond.

Frozen waves here followed in succession, and hollow followed hollow, each less in magnitude than its forerunner.

Suddenly I saw before me the smooth, shining bed of the glacier itself, and away to the north-west was the curious reddish rock under which the Mid Glacier Depot had been placed. My feelings hardly bear setting down. I was overcome with emotion, but my prayer was answered and we were saved.

I had considerable difficulty in working back to the party amongst the labyrinth of ice bridges, but I fortunately found a patch of hard snow whereon my crampons had made their mark. From here I easily traced my footmarks back, and was soon in company with my friends. They were truly relieved at my news. On consulting my watch I found that I had been away one hour. It took us actually three times as long to work our sledge out into the smooth ice of the glacier, but this reached, we camped and made some tea before marching on to the depot, which lay but a few miles from us.

We ate the last of our biscuits at this camp, and finished everything but tea and sugar; then, new men, we struck our little camp, harnessed up and swept down over the smooth ice with scarcely an effort needed to move the sledge along. When we reached the depot



we had another meal and slept through the night and well on into the next day.

Consulting my old Antarctic diary I see that the last sentence written on the 17th January says, "I had to keep my goggles off all day as it was a matter of life or death with us, and snow blindness must be risked after. . . ." (a gap follows here until 29th January). The next day I had an awful attack of snow blindness, but the way down the glacier was so easy that it did not matter. I forget whether Lashly or Crean led then, but I marched alongside, keeping in touch with the trace by hitching the lanyard of my sundial on to it and holding this in my hand. I usually carried the sundial slung round my neck, so that it was easy to pick it up and consult it. That day I was in awful pain, and although we had some dope for putting on our eyes when so smitten, I found that the greatest relief of all was obtained by bandaging my eyes with a poultice made of tea leaves after use—quaint places, quaint practices, but the tip is worth considering for future generations of explorers and alpine climbers.

Our homeward march continued for day after day with no very exciting incidents. We met no more crevasses that were more than a foot or so wide, and we worked our way down on to the Great Ice Barrier with comparatively easy marches, although the distances we covered were surprising to us all—seventeen miles a day we averaged.

On the 30th January Lashly and I had been fourteen weeks out, and we had exhausted practically every topic of conversation beyond food, distances made good, temperatures, and the weather. Crean, as already set down, had started with the Main Southern Party a week after Lashly and I had first set out as the pioneers with those wretched failures, the motor sledges. By this time I had made the unpleasant discovery that I was suffering

from scurvy. It came on with a stiffening of the knee joints, then I could not straighten my legs, and finally they were horrible to behold, swollen, bruised, and green. As day followed day my condition became worse: my gums were ulcerated and my teeth loose. Then finally I got hæmorrhage. Crean and Lashly were dreadfully concerned on my behalf, and how they nursed me and helped me along no words of mine can properly describe. What men they were. Those awful days—I trudged on with them for hundreds of miles, and each step hurt me more. I had done too much on the outward journey, for what with building all the depot cairns ahead of the pony party, and what with the effects of the spring sledge journey, too much had been asked of me. I had never been out of harness from the day I left Hut Point, for even with the motor sledges we practically pulled them along. Crean had had an easier time, for he had led a pony up to the foot of the Beardmore Glacier, and Lashly had not done the spring sledging journey, which took a certain amount out of me with its temperature falling to 73 degrees below zero. The disappointment of not being included in the Polar Party had not helped me much, and I must admit that my prospects of winning through became duller day by day. I suffered absolute agonies in forcing my way along, and eventually I could only push myself by means of a ski-stick, for I could not step out properly. I somehow waddled on ski until one day I fainted when striving to start a march. Crean and Lashly picked me up, and Crean thought I was dead. His hot tears fell on my face, and as I came to I gave a weak kind of laugh.

They rigged the camp up once more and put me in my bag, and then those two gallant fellows held a short council of war. I endeavoured to get them to leave me when they came in with their suggestions, but it was



useless to argue with them, and I now felt that I had shot my bolt. I vainly tried to persuade them to leave me in my sleeping-bag with what food they could spare, but they put me on the sledge, bag and all, and strapped me as comfortably as they could with their own sleeping-bags spread under me to make for greater ease.

How weary their marches must have been—ten miles of foot-slogging each day. I could see them from the sledge by raising my head—how slowly their legs seemed to move—wearily but nobly they fought on until one day a blizzard came and completely spoilt the surface. The two men had been marching nearly 1,500 miles, their strength was spent, and great though their hearts were, they had now to give up. In vain they tried to move the sledge with my wasted weight upon it—it was hopeless.

Very seriously and sadly they re-erected our tent and put me once again inside. I thought I was being put into my grave. Outside I heard them talking, low notes of sadness, but with a certain thread of determination running through what they said. They were discussing which should go and which should stay. Crean had done, if anything, the lighter share of the work, as already explained, and he therefore set out to march thirty-five miles with no food but a few biscuits and a little stick of chocolate.

He hoped to find relief at Hut Point. Failing this, he would go on if possible to Cape Evans.

Crean came in to say good-bye to me. I thanked him for what he was doing in a weak, broken sort of way, and Lashly held open the little round tent door to let me see the last of him. He strode out nobly and finely—I wondered if I should ever see him again. Then Lashly came in to me, shut the tent door, and made me a little porridge out of some oatmeal we got from the last depot we had passed.

After I had eaten it he made me comfortable by laying me on Crean's sleeping-bag, which made my own seem softer, for I was very, very sore after being dragged a hundred miles on a jolting, jumping sledge. Then I slept and awoke to find Lashly's kind face looking down at me. There were very few wounded men in the Great War nursed as I was by him.

A couple of days passed, and every now and then Lashly would open up the tent door, go out and search the horizon for some possible sign of relief. The end had nearly come, and I was past caring; we had no food, except a few paraffin-saturated biscuits, and Lashly in his weakened state without food could never have marched in. He took it all very quietly—a noble, steel-true man—but relief did come at the end of that day when everything looked its blackest.

We heard the baying of the dogs, first once, then again. Lashly, who was lying down by my side quietly talking, sprang to his feet, looked out, and saw!

They galloped right up to the tent door, and the leader, a beautiful grey dog named Krisravitsa, seemed to understand the situation, for he came right into the tent and licked my hands and face. I put my poor weak hands up and gripped his furry ears. Perhaps to hide my feelings I kissed his old hairy, Siberian face with the kiss that was meant for Lashly. We were both dreadfully affected at our rescue.

Atkinson and the Russian dog-boy, Dimitri, had come out hot-foot to save us, and of all men in the Expedition none could have been better chosen than "Little Aitch," our clever naval doctor. After resting his dogs and feeding me with carefully prepared foodstuffs, he got me on one sledge and Lashly on the other, the dogs were given their head, and in little more than three hours we covered the thirty-five miles into Hut Point, where I was glad to see Crean's face once more and to hear first



hand about his march. It had taken him eighteen hours' plodding through those awful snows from our camp to Hut Point, where fortunately he met Atkinson and Dimitri and told them of my condition.

After the Expedition was over the King gave Lashly and Crean the Albert Medal for their bravery in helping me win through.

ADMIRAL E. R. G. R. EVANS, *South with Scott*

## THE LAST SOLO

Ian Hay (General Beith) is famous as a humorist and as the author of *Housemaster*. In the early years of the Great War he wrote two of the liveliest and most graphic stories of a soldier's life during those desperate days: *The First Hundred Thousand* and its sequel *Carrying On*. The following story, from the second book, deals with an episode of the famous Battle of the Somme.

MEANWHILE, up in the line, 'A' Company were holding on grimly to what are usually described as "certain advanced elements" of the village.

Village fighting is a confused and untidy business, but it possesses certain redeeming features. The combatants are usually so inextricably mixed up that the artillery are compelled to refrain from participation. That comes later, when you have cleared the village of the enemy, and his guns are preparing the ground for the inevitable counter-attack.

So far 'A' Company had done nobly. From the moment when they had lined up before Montauban in the gross darkness preceding yesterday's dawn, until the moment when Bobby Little led them in one victorious rush into the outskirts of the village, they had never encountered a set-back. By sunset they had penetrated some way farther; now creeping stealthily forward under the shelter of a broken wall to hurl bombs into the windows of an occupied cottage; now climbing precariously to some commanding position in order to open fire with a Lewis gun; now making a sudden dash across an open space. Such work offered peculiar opportunities to small and well-handled parties—opportunities of which Bobby's veterans availed themselves right readily. Angus M'Lachlan, for instance, accompanied by a small following of seasoned experts,



had twice rounded up parties of the enemy in cellars, and had despatched the same back to Headquarters with his compliments and a promise of more. Mucklewame and four men had bombed their way along a communication trench leading to one of the side streets of the village—a likely avenue for a counter-attack—and having reached the end of the trench had built up a sandbag barricade, and had held the same against the assaults of hostile bombers until a Vickers machine-gun had arrived in charge of an energetic subaltern of that youthful but thriving organization the Suicide Club, or Machine-gun Corps, and closed the street to further Teutonic traffic.

During the night there had been periods of quiescence, devoted to consolidation, and here and there to snatches of uneasy slumber. Angus M'Lachlan, fairly in his element, had trailed his enormous length in and out of the back-yards and brick-heaps of the village; visiting every point in his irregular line, testing defences; bestowing praise; and ensuring that every man had his share of food and rest. Unutterably grimy, but inexpressibly cheerful, he reported progress to Major Wagstaffe when that nocturnal Rambler visited him in the small hours.

"Well, Angus, how goes it?" inquired Wagstaffe.

"We have won the match, sir," replied Angus, with simple seriousness. "We are just playing the bye now!"

And with that he crawled away, with the unnecessary stealth of a small boy playing robbers, to encourage his dour paladins to further efforts.

"We shall probably be relieved this evening," he explained to them, "and we must make everything secure. It would never do to leave our new positions untenable by other troops. They might not be so reliable"—with a paternal smile—"as you! Now, our right flank is not safe yet. We can improve the position

very much if we can secure that *estaminet*, standing up like an island among those ruined houses on our right front. You see the sign, *Aux Bons Fermiers*, over the door. The trouble is that a German machine-gun is sweeping the intervening space—and we cannot see the gun! There it goes again. See the brick-dust fly! Keep down! They are firing mainly across our front, but a stray bullet may come this way.”

The platoon crouched low behind their improvised rampart of brick rubble, while machine-gun bullets swept low, with misleading *claquement*, along the space in front of them, from some hidden position on their right. Presently the firing stopped. Brother Boche was merely “losing off a belt,” as a precautionary measure, at commendably regular intervals.

“I cannot locate that gun,” said Angus impatiently. “Can you, Corporal M’Snape?”

“It is not in the Estamint itself, sirr,” replied M’Snape. (“Estamint” is as near as our rank and file ever get to *estaminet*.) “It seems to be mounted some place higher up the street. I doubt they cannot see us themselves—only the ground in front of us.”

“If we could reach the *estaminet* itself,” said Angus thoughtfully, “we could get a more extended view. Sergeant Mucklewame, select ten men, including three bombers, and follow me. I am going to find a jumping-off place. The Lewis gun too.”

Presently the little party were crouching round their officer, in a sheltered position on the right of the line—which for the moment appeared to be ‘in the air.’ Except for the intermittent streams of machine-gun fire, and an occasional shrapnel-burst overhead, all was quiet. The enemy’s counter-attack was not yet ready.

“Now listen carefully,” said Angus, who had just finished scribbling a despatch. “First of all, you, Bogle, take this message to the telephone, and get it sent to



Company Headquarters. Now you others. We will wait till that machine-gun has fired another belt. Then, the moment it has finished, while they are getting out the next belt, I will dash across to the *estaminet* over there. M'Snape, you will come with me, but no one else—yet. If the *estaminet* seems capable of being held, I will signal to you, Sergeant Mucklewame, and you will send your party across, in driblets, not forgetting the Lewis gun. By that time I may have located the German machine-gun, so we should be able to knock it out with the Lewis."

Further speech was cut short by a punctual fantasia from the gun in question. Angus and M'Snape crouched behind the shattered wall, awaiting their chance. The firing ceased.

"*Now!*" whispered Angus.

Next moment officer and corporal were flying across the open, and before the mechanical Boche gunner could jerk the new belt into position both had found sanctuary within the open doorway of the half-ruined *estaminet*.

Nay, more than both; for as the panting pair flung themselves into shelter, a third figure, short and stout, in an ill-fitting kilt, tumbled heavily through the doorway after them. Simultaneously a stream of machine-gun bullets went storming past.

"Just in time!" observed Angus, well pleased. "Bogle, what are you doing here?"

"I was given tae unnerstand, sirr," replied Mr Bogle calmly, "when I jined the regiment, that in action an officer's servant stands by his officer."

"That is true," conceded Angus; "but you had no right to follow me against orders. Did you not hear me say that no one but Corporal M'Snape was to come?"

"No, sirr. I doubt I was away at the 'phone."

"Well, now you are here, wait inside this doorway,

where you can see Sergeant Mucklewame's party, and look out for signals. M'Snape, let us find that machine-gun."

The pair made their way to the hitherto blind side of the building, and cautiously peeped through a much-perforated shutter in the living-room.

"Do you see it, sirr?" inquired M'Snape eagerly.

Angus chuckled.

"See it? Fine! It is right in the open, in the middle of the street. Look!"

He relinquished his peep-hole. The German machine-gun was mounted in the street itself, behind an improvised barrier of bricks and sandbags. It was less than a hundred yards away, sited in a position which, though screened from the view of Angus's platoon farther down, enabled it to sweep all the ground in front of the position. This it was now doing with great intensity, for the brief public appearance of Angus and M'Snape had effectually converted intermittent into continuous fire.

"We must get the Lewis gun over at once," muttered Angus. "It can knock that breast-work to pieces."

He crossed the house again, to see if any of Mucklewame's men had arrived.

They had not. The man with the Lewis gun was lying dead half-way across the street, with his precious weapon on the ground beside him. Two other men, both wounded, were crawling back whence they came, taking what cover they could from the storm of bullets which whizzed a few inches over their flinching bodies.

Angus hastily semaphored to Mucklewame to hold his men in check for the present. Then he returned to the other side of the house.

"How many men are serving that gun?" he said to M'Snape. "Can you see?"

"Only two, sirr, I think. I cannot see them, but



that wee breast-work will not cover more than a couple of men."

"Mphm," observed Angus thoughtfully. "I expect they have been left behind to hold on. Have you a bomb about you?"

The admirable M'Snape produced from his pocket a Mills grenade, and handed it to his superior.

"Just the one, sirr," he said.

"Go you," commanded Angus, his voice rising to a more than usually Highland inflection, "and semaphore to Mucklewame that when he hears the explosion of *this*"—he pulled out the safety-pin of the grenade and gripped the grenade itself in his enormous paw—"followed, probably, by the temporary cessation of the machine-gun, he is to bring his men over here in a bunch, as hard as they can pelt. Put it as briefly as you can, but make sure he understands. He has a good signaller with him. Send Bogle to report when you have finished. Now repeat what I have said to you. . . . That's right. Carry on!"

M'Snape was gone. Angus, left alone, pensively restored the safety-pin to the grenade, and laid the grenade upon the ground beside him. Then he proceeded to write a brief letter in his field message-book. This he placed in an envelope which he took from his breast pocket. The envelope was already addressed—to the *Reverend Neil M'Lachlan, The Manse*, in a very remote Highland village. (Angus had no mother.) He closed the envelope, initialled it, and buttoned it up in his breast pocket again. After that he took up his grenade and proceeded to make a further examination of the premises. Presently he found what he wanted; and by the time Bogle arrived to announce that Sergeant Mucklewame had signalled "message understood," his arrangements were complete.

"Stay by this small hole in the wall, Bogle," he said,

"and the moment the Lewis gun arrives tell them to mount it here and open fire on the enemy gun."

He left the room, leaving Bogle alone, to listen to the melancholy rustle of peeling wall-paper within and the steady crackling of bullets without. But when, peering through the improvised loophole, he next caught sight of his officer, Angus had emerged from the house by the cellar window, and was creeping with infinite caution behind the shelter of what had once been the wall of the *estaminet's* back-yard (but was now an uneven bank of bricks, averaging two feet high), in the direction of the German machine-gun. The gun, oblivious of the danger now threatening its right front, continued to fire steadily and hopefully down the street.

Slowly, painfully, Angus crawled on, until he found himself within the right angle formed by the corner of the yard. He could go no farther without being seen. Between him and the German gun lay the cobbled surface of the street, offering no cover whatsoever except one mighty shell-crater, situated midway between Angus and the gun, and full to the brim with rain-water.

A single peep over the wall gave him his bearings. The gun was too far away to be reached by a grenade, even when thrown by Angus M'Lachlan. Still, it would create a diversion. It was a time bomb. He would——

He stretched out his long arm to its full extent behind him, gave one mighty over-arm sweep, and with all the crackling strength of his mighty sinews hurled the grenade.

It fell into the exact centre of the flooded shell-crater.

Angus said something under his breath which would have shocked a disciple of Kultur. Fortunately the two German gunners did not hear him. But they observed the splash, fifty yards away, and it relieved them from *ennui*, for they were growing tired of firing at nothing.



They had not seen the grenade thrown, and were a little puzzled as to the cause of the phenomenon.

Four seconds later their curiosity was more than satisfied. With a muffled roar the shell-hole suddenly spouted its liquid contents and other *débris* straight to the heavens, startling them considerably and entirely obscuring their vision.

A moment later, with an exultant yell, Angus M'Lachlan was upon them. He sprang into their vision out of the descending cascade—a towering, terrible, kilted figure, bareheaded and Berserk mad. He was barely forty yards away.

Initiative is not the *forte* of the Teuton. Number One of the German gun mechanically traversed his weapon four degrees to the right and continued to press the thumb-piece. Mud and splinters of brick sprang up round Angus's feet; but still he came on. He was not twenty yards away now. The gunner, beginning to boggle between waiting and bolting, fumbled at his elevating gear, but Angus was right on him before his thumbs got back to work. Then indeed the gun spoke out with no uncertain voice for perhaps two seconds. After that it ceased fire altogether.

Almost simultaneously there came a triumphant roar lower down the street, as Mucklewame and his followers dashed obliquely across into the *estaminet*. Mucklewame himself was carrying the derelict Lewis gun. In the doorway stood the watchful M'Snape.

"This way, quick!" he shouted. "We have the Gairman gun spotted, and the officer is needing the Lewis!"

But M'Snape was wrong. The Lewis was not required.

A few moments later, in the face of brisk sniping from the houses higher up the street, James Bogle, officer's servant—a member of that despised class which,

according to the *bandar log* at home, spends the whole of its time pressing its master's trousers and smoking his cigarettes somewhere back in billets—led out a stretcher party to the German gun. Number One had been killed by a shot from Angus's revolver. Number Two had adopted Hindenburg tactics, and was no more to be seen. Angus himself was lying stone-dead a yard from the muzzle of the gun which he, single-handed, had put out of action.

His men carried him back to the *Estaminet Aux Bons Fermiers*, with the German gun, which was afterwards employed to good purpose during the desperate days of attacking and counter-attacking which ensued before the village was finally secured. They laid him in the inner room, and proceeded to put the *estaminet* in a state of defence—ready to hold the same against all comers until such time as the relieving Division should take over, and they themselves be enabled, under the kindly cloak of darkness, to carry back their beloved officer to a more worthy resting-place.

In the left-hand breast pocket of Angus's tunic they found his last letter to his father. Two German machine-gun bullets had passed through it. It was forwarded, with a covering letter, by Colonel Kemp. In the letter Angus's commanding officer informed Neil M'Lachlan that his son had been recommended posthumously for the highest honour that the King bestows upon his soldiers.

IAN HAY, *Carrying On*



## MEETING DEATH BRAVELY

The story which follows is a tragic one; but it is also a story of heroic endurance and splendid fortitude. It tells how three men, trapping in North Canada in 1926, met their deaths by starvation and cold owing to the exceptional length and severity of the winter. The three were John Hornby, the son of an All-England cricketer, an experienced trapper; his young cousin Edgar Christian, who had just left school; and a friend of Hornby's, Harold Adlard. Edgar Christian kept a diary in which he recorded, simply and unaffectedly, their way of living, their hardships and difficulties, and finally the deaths, first of Hornby, and then of Adlard. He himself, a lad of eighteen, was thus left on his own, shut off from civilization by the snow-bound wastes, and driven to search for food by digging in the snow for scraps left outside the hut. At length he too died, and only his diary remains to tell the world of the fate of himself and his companions, and to show the fine spirit in which they faced that fate.

Throughout the diary there is scarcely a word of complaint. He records his hardships without self-pity, and when at last he is left alone, he still sets down the symptoms of his condition with calm and steady detachment, hoping almost to the end for a change in the weather conditions which will enable him to regain his lost world. We may well hope never to have to face such an end as his, starved and alone. But we may well hope, too, to be able to meet our end, however and whenever it comes, with the same quiet dignity.

The following extracts from his diary are taken from entries made during the last two months. Jack Hornby had fallen and injured his leg on March 15, but characteristically carried on without complaint.

*April 1st.*

**T**HIS month has started in none too good, we had to eat Wolverine hide for supper. Stormed hard all day and we could do nothing much. Jack took a walk to creek, located Hare trail and set a trap which I hope to visit to-morrow. Jack is suffering agonies in left leg which must make life absolute hell under the present

conditions. Harold getting wood and water and says he feels rotten. So do we!

*April 2nd.*

Milder weather seems to have come along to-day which we hope will improve matters. Jack took a walk to where Caribou was killed in February to bring in paunch. He managed to collect a little blood which made an excellent snack. I went up creek to look at Hare trap but nothing. Set one more Hare trap and hunted Ptarmigan which seem to have fed everywhere but otherwise are not to be seen. Poor Harold is feeling weak getting wood and I hope we get food soon. Jack suffering agonies from muscles in left leg, probably a change in weather causing it. To-morrow I hope to set two Hare traps down river and two Fox traps at the same time and see if any Ptarmigan on island.

*April 3rd.*

Another fruitless and very disappointing day. Instead of mild weather this morning it was blowing hard from N.E. and clear sky. Jack's leg is still very painful and he gets little sleep. We slept on till late to-day being very tired last night, and we had breakfast to prepare from Wolverine hide. We got our meal at noon and then walked to the creek to look at Hare trap. Saw Ptarmigan but did not get one, a great pity. This evening again mild and cloudy. Hope it stays to-day. Saw two ravens also.

*April 4th.*

I now write to-day's diary as far as it goes to make sure of it. Jack during night decided that as the weather seemed milder he should make an attempt to get in Caribou guts from Barrens as his leg is getting worse and he feels it is the last day he can move on no more grub than we have without eating Wolverine. Harold



dug up fish scraps and bones from bait pile and cooked them up. Meanwhile I rested and Jack kept on saying he would be all in and absolutely crocked when he eventually got home again and that we would have to carry on. What a mental strain it was. I felt homesick as never before and hope to God they know not what Jack is suffering. I rubbed his leg amidst tears and he had saved a little Fox meat for me to eat. This cheered me up. I suppose I was crumbling up because of no grub but still, by midday Jack started, all muffled up, looking as cold as charity and could hardly walk. I wish I could buck the cold more and share his hardships, but he has a mind and will of his own which no one else has got. I now sit here with Harold frying up bits of fish to eat and wait for Jack, who by now must be icy cold in the Barrens.

5 P.M.—At last Jack is safely home again. Got very cold digging in the snow and could not find the grub. To-night we sit around the fire and have fish scraps for supper and will get more for breakfast. Jack feels content to have got back and done as he did and this makes us all feel better and more optimistic as there must be a burst in weather soon. During day saw a Raven twice. In evening clouded over and turned milder. Whether to stay or not?

*April 5th.*

To-day's weather must certainly prove to be the best though unpleasant. Very strong thawing South wind and we could not get out to hunt Ptarmigan even. Found fish scraps which give a good little bite as long as we stay in the house and keep warm. The cache we are now using up as firewood as none of us are in condition to go and get wood on what food we eat.

To-day after leaving off for three days I had some tea but found I was very weak after it so I quit for good

now. Jack has rested up his leg well to-day but I am sure yesterday must have weakened it. Harold talks like an old woman all day in the house and awful worry to Jack who is the only one really suffering pain. Time moves on, each day longer and when fine weather comes Caribou more likely to come so we hang on, hoping for the best in a good warm house.

*April 10th.*

Jack to-day is looking very bad and speaks very weak and seems to be all in. This is very worrying because I must carry on as Harold certainly has not got the guts to. A very dull day but I took a walk to look at Hare traps which contained nothing. Saw two Chicken Hawks which are the first sign of Spring coming. Jack still wants to go on to the Barrens to dig up Caribou guts but he is not fit at all and I hope to God we get some game very soon. I can't last for ever as I am, I am sure, and Jack has gone too far already. A burst of fine weather might enable us to get Ptarmigan. Impossible now in cloudy weather.

*April 11th.*

9 A.M.—Situation is now very serious. Jack last night told both Harold and myself that he felt he was sinking fast and might pass away at any moment, so he talked to us as to what should be done. I promised him I can carry on for five days on Wolverine hide, doing heavy work and hunting. Harold took a walk after Ptarmigan last evening which proved he can walk, so Jack has told him he must get on to the Barrens and dig up the Caribou paunch. I am myself capable but do not even know where they are and Jack says I must keep my energy in case Caribou come on the river in a day or so. Last night Jack said he could last a week if I would, but he had a bad night, legs paining and now he says that two days is the most. Harold kept fire all night



while in vain I tried to rest, but how can I now under such worry?

*10 A.M.*—Have made some soup from bones and Jack says it was good, but at all costs the paunch must be got to-day. Unfortunately there is now a big wind blowing and whether Harold has the vitality to make the trip I know not but can only urge him on to go and promise that I will keep a-going after. I have wood and water to get and a hide boiling for evening.

*10.15 P.M.*—Jack has just had most violent pains and asked for a cold water bandage on his leg. Harold is trying to rest before going out. It seems as if Jack is sinking fast now. As each grip of pain comes on his heart will not stand it. The food we are now eating is more nourishing than most we have been having lately, but I am afraid it is heart failing now. Jack has taken an aspirin to relieve pain.

*12 noon.*—Harold has started off and Jack has been talking to me in more cheerful tones. Says he will pull through at all costs as he feels the food he now has is doing him good.

*4 P.M.*—Harold has returned with the news that Caribou have been plentiful on the Ridges. He brought with him a little frozen blood and says he is fit enough to go out again to-morrow. Jack has had another meal with us and would simply insist on my having some of his. Darkness now coming on and Jack is resting though he feels that in early morning he is sure to be bad again as usual. Not very cheerful to hear him say this though I know it well. During day Jack changed on to my bed and says he is more comfortable. Weather has now turned very mild indeed.

*April 12th.*

Last night after Harold got home I had wood to chop, move water and prepare a meal so did not get

to bed till 12 midnight. Kept fire on all night and got meal in morning and tea for Jack. . . .

5 P.M.—I heard Harold firing at Caribou just now and then have been talking to Jack. He is very weak indeed, keeps on saying that he can last out fine and yet at the same time he is instructing me as to what to do if he might pass away. I hope to God Harold got Caribou as it is the only hope now I am afraid.

6.30 P.M.—Harold back with nothing but saw Caribou so to-morrow he is not going to dig for gut pile. No supper ready now, this means no rest till midnight.

### *April 16th.*

After a very restless night and Harold and I both played out and weeping at times to see poor Jack in such a way, at 4.30 heard Ptarmigan calling. Harold went out and shot one after about an hour. Simply wonderful of him really, but alas, Jack is too far gone now to enjoy such a meal.

10.30 A.M.—Jack started to sleep and fall unconscious so we can do no more just now. Harold and I so tired we can hardly keep a watch on Jack now. The heart still beating and breathing regular.

4.30 P.M.—Between us have managed to prepare a meal of hide and rest a little. Jack still breathing but unconscious. Have got some broth from Ptarmigan in case he can take it at any time. Must now get out and cut wood for to-night and get water.

### *April 17th.*

1 o'clock.—At 6.45 last evening poor Jack passed peacefully away. Until that minute I think I remained the same but then I was a wreck. Harold good pal was a marvel in helping me and putting things a little straight for the night. I managed to cut some wood by dark, Harold promised to do the rest. He talked to me so wonderfully and realized my condition I am sure.



I lay on my bed and listened to him talk and occasionally I dozed off feeling so worn out, and he kept fire during night and brought me tea and aspirin to help along, which was a relief as I was able to sleep. To-day Harold and I do just the essentials and I am looking over certain things as well. We both are very weak but more cheery, and determined to pull through and go out to let the world know of the last days of the finest man I have ever known and one who has made a foundation to build my life upon.

Snowstorm all day.

(A few days later Harold too fell ill, and had to keep to his bed.)

*April 25th.*

Last night it rained hard all night, the house and everything drenching wet. During day a very strong South wind got up and simply whistled through the building and made matters bad, as I could not cut wood from the cache owing to the slush and weakness. Harold finds his body gets very cramped up lying in bed, and I am not able to fix him up properly after digging in the snow for scraps. Managed to find a good supper and breakfast of rancid fish. . . .

*April 26th.*

Weather seems to be much nicer in morning, though there is a lack of sunshine which makes life more miserable. Slept till 9 o'clock after turning in at midnight, and fixed up breakfast and a boil of bones. . . . During day I got in enough scraps to make a couple of meals, but I got so wet and chilled in so doing that I could hardly cut wood after it. All this time Harold should get more attention. Is suffering, but grub and wood are important also.

*April 27th.*

Last night I got up and attended to Harold and had tea. This seemed to take it out of me considerably, in spite of sleeping on till 9 o'clock and having a fairly good breakfast of scraps. As yesterday, with an effort, found enough scraps for supper and breakfast, chiefly fish bones. Blowing from N.W. and cloudy all day. No signs of animal life except snow-flakes (!). Have fixed up Harold's bed. He rested better at night, but is very weak, especially on left side. . . .

*April 28th.*

(No entry.)

*May 4th.*

Now I start writing in my diary again, from here. At present can only state that since I last wrote I have not had as much as a moment's time to do such a thing, for Harold's condition grew worse and so did mine. At 10.5 P.M. Dear Harold passed away after a bad relapse the previous night. . . . As for myself now I am played out after no sleep and food for a long time so have managed to make up some soup from bones and have a cup of tea and rest. To-day I must fix things up as best possible, cut wood, dig in snow for scraps of fish which we are surviving on still and rest as best I can and trust for a good day to-morrow. I cannot hunt, as walking around in soft snow is beyond my powers now, and the weather is bad. Not even Whisky Jacks are flying around owing to cold. N.E. wind blowing.

*May 5th.*

Yesterday I dug in snow and ice near to house for three hours during the afternoon, and found food enough for more than one day to keep myself a-going. Fish scraps enough for a good supper, the guts of a Fox and Wolverine which had the liver of Fox and



little gut fat, two small pieces of cooked Caribou meat and a quantity of bones. Last night I had the fish scraps, and to-day the meat lasts out, leaving guts, bones and small plate of meat scrapings which is one day's food what with bone boil added. To-day I resumed my digging and again had luck in finding more good food which had been discarded, one very fat Wolverine gut and kidneys, heart and liver, and one Fox gut, a quantity of meaty bones, and enough fish for one meal. Seeing how bad the weather apparently is for the time of year and not a sign of animal life anywhere around, I must save all the food I can to carry me as long as possible. . . .

(Still the bad weather continued, and there was scarcely a sign of the animals and birds which would have been about by this time of the year under normal conditions. Meanwhile he grew weaker and weaker, unable to maintain his strength on the inadequate nourishment with which the food scraps supplied him.)

*May 17th.*

Another bad day, no fine weather, could not move out to get wood so eventually cut bed-pole to burn. If I cannot get grub to-morrow must make preparations.

*May 18th.*

Weather changed, managed to pound up bones out in sun and gathered in some scraps which make meal and some for to-morrow I hope. Ptarmigan came near to house once but could not get. One Swan flew over, one Raven and three Robins I saw.

*May 19th.*

Thawing in morning. Got out again and had in few scraps, but few, and then snow in afternoon, so had to den up and hope. Rest till to-morrow and then (if) sun I might get out again.

*May 20th-June 1st.*

Have existed by walking and crawling in and out of house. . . . On 22nd I found lots of meat under snow and four good meaty bones covered in fat and grease. These put me on my legs for three days cutting wood, etc. I cooked up enough fish for four days and then rested, thinking I could lay to and strengthen when the weather might be warmer and I would find more grub thawing out and even shoot Ptarmigan if I could walk. Alas, got weaker and weather was blowing in snow-storm for four days, after that not even thawing in daytime.

Now June 1st.—I have grub on hand but weaker than I have ever been in my life and no migration North of birds or animals since 19th (Swan). . . .

At 2 A.M. went to bed feeling content and bowl full of fish by me to eat in morning.

9 A.M.—Weaker than ever. Have eaten all I can. Have food on hand but heart pe(a)tering? Sunshine is bright now. See if that does any good to me if I get out and bring in wood to make fire to-night.

Make preparations now.

Got out, too weak and all in now. Left things late.

[This was the last entry in the diary. The exact time of Edgar Christian's death is not known, but his end could not have been long delayed. Even at the last his steadiness of spirit remained. One of his final actions must have been to crawl to the empty stove and insert his diary and other papers. When the official search party arrived two years later they found everything in the leaky cabin rotting and decayed, except the papers protected by the stove. A piece of paper lay on the outside. On it were printed the almost illegible letters: "*Who . . . look in stove.*"]

EDGAR CHRISTIAN, *Unflinching*



## HEROES OF THE AIR RAIDS

THE story of the air attacks on London and other great cities of Britain is a story of havoc and distress; but it is a story also of quiet courage and sturdy heroism. The almost nightly rain of bombs made gallant rescues seem a commonplace. Firemen, rescue party workers, doctors, policemen, nurses, first aid workers, air raid wardens, and men and women unattached to any civil defence organization—all these made it their duty to seek out the trapped and injured wherever the enemy raider left its trail of injury and destruction.

The tale of some of these unassuming acts of heroism will never be told. The rescuers do not wish to speak: the rescued were unconscious, or perhaps did not live to pay tribute to their saviours. But in many cases the exploits were witnessed, and at least some of the details noted. It is fitting that a book dealing with brave actions should find a place for a brief record of the deeds of some of these most recent heroes and heroines of rescue work.

Among the most valuable of such workers, though seldom in the limelight, have been the doctors. A doctor's life is always a trying one: after a severe air raid the calls upon his services may well be overwhelming. Not only are there the injuries of the rescued to deal with, but there may be unfortunate victims trapped beneath tons of debris or buried in cellars. In many such cases it is the doctor's task to make his way at risk of his life through the debris to give injections to the injured, so as to ease their sufferings while the long work of rescue is proceeding.

Such, for example, was the lot which fell to Dr George, who worked for six days almost without sleep after the terrible raid which caused so much distress on the Clydeside in March, 1941. One of the victims of the raid was a woman who was buried for nearly six days under a wrecked tenement. Dr George tunnelled his way through the rubble, tearing away broken bricks and masonry with his bare hands until he could reach her. The wreckage had been shored up with timber as soon as moaning was heard, and after forcing his way through this to the woman's side, he remained there for several hours in order to comfort the woman and to give injections as they were needed, despite the ever-present danger of the collapse of the shored-up debris.

In the same district a woman doctor took part in the rescue of two men who were buried for over seven days. Rescuers removing the body of a woman who had been killed were amazed to hear moans coming from within the tons of wreckage. A passage was tunnelled towards the spot from which the sound came, and a woman doctor crawled through to give an injection to the victim. After administering it she said, "That wasn't bad, was it?" though she little expected an answer from a man who had been buried for seven days. To her surprise, however, he opened his eyes and replied, "No, not so bad," and afterwards helped to direct his rescuers to free him. It is sad to relate, after such a deliverance, that the injured man later died in hospital; but the story of bombing attacks could not truthfully be told were the grimmer side glossed over.

Another man rescued at the same time, however, was more fortunate. He was awakened by a tremendous crash when the bomb fell, to find himself pinned down by debris, though his arms were free. But he had been saved from the worst of the falling masonry by a beam which had crashed near him; while the fact that he was



in bed helped to protect him from the cold. Days and nights passed. He had no clear realization of their passing, for all was dark within his tomb of debris. For long periods he lost consciousness. Strangely enough he did not suffer much from hunger or thirst. Seven days without food or water! Few people could have survived the ordeal, especially under such conditions. Only the fact that he was young and exceptionally strong carried him through this long nightmare of burial, and enabled him subsequently to recover. It is typical of the spirit of such men that when he was at last released he calmly asked for a cigarette and a cup of tea before being taken to hospital.

Nurses have played a worthy part in relieving the sufferings of the injured. It has too often happened that the targets found by Nazi bombs, intentionally or otherwise, have been hospitals. In such cases the nurses and doctors, after being themselves bombed, have had to set to work to rescue their patients. Typical of the nurses was a sister in a Kent hospital, who, when the walls of the building had collapsed on some of the patients, crawled in and out of the wreckage in her nightdress, giving injections by the light of electric torches. In another hospital where a staff dance was in progress when a bomb struck one of the blocks, nurses in dance frocks helped all night in the torch-light rescues.

Policemen have been the heroes of many air raid rescues. Such, for instance, was Special Constable Moss, of Coventry, who was awarded the George Cross for his superhuman rescue efforts during the devastating raid on that city in November, 1940. One house was completely wrecked, burying three occupants beneath it. Though bombs were falling, and there was, in fact, a delayed-action bomb only twenty yards away, Moss led a rescue party to the aid of the three victims. Moreover, owing to falling debris and escaping gas, con-

ditions were exceptionally dangerous. When they became critical he undertook the work alone, clearing a way through the wreckage, and thus being responsible for the rescue of the three people.

Afterwards it became known that there were more people trapped in an adjoining building. Again Moss led the rescue party. When the other workers had to give up through sheer fatigue after hours of toil, Moss still carried on, in spite of the ruins falling all around him. Eventually one person was rescued alive and three bodies recovered, owing, as it was officially put, to "his superhuman efforts and utter disregard for personal injury."

Another policeman hero was one who assisted in rescuing victims of a heavy raid on Southampton early in 1941. This man crawled into the cellar of a public-house, where several people had been sheltering, and which was becoming flooded. With water up to his chest he helped to make an exit for the trapped people—one of whom, however, was drowned—and led them each in turn to safety.

No less brave was the action of the Folkestone policeman who was present when a tenement was bombed, trapping a woman in a larder where she had taken shelter. She was in imminent danger of being buried alive, for the forty-foot walls of the building were tottering and liable to collapse at any moment. The realization of her position affected her nerves, and she began to give way, not inexcusably, to panic. This would have lowered considerably the chances of her rescue being effected. So the policeman crawled through the rubble to the larder, in spite of the grave danger of being buried alive with her, and calmed her until she could be released by the rescue party.

One more instance. Two south London policemen, one a regular, the other a member of the War Reserve,



ran to a house which had been partly demolished by a bomb. On the top floor a man was pinned by part of the fallen roof. From a broken lamp bracket in the room gas was escaping, adding to the dangers of rescue work. The two policemen clambered up to the room and plugged up the gas pipe. Then, with bricks and masonry still falling around them, they lifted the roof and supported it on their shoulders for twenty minutes until the men were successfully extricated with the aid of the rescue squad.

The rescue parties, of course, play a vital part in nearly all these operations. Sometimes their work may appear undramatic: it is never easy. A typical example of the work they are continually called upon to do is shown in this account of a rescue squad's task after a London hospital had been bombed in September, 1940. A student who had been sleeping several storeys up was buried under a mound of debris, but she was able to speak to the squad and to give them some idea as to where she was. Guided by her voice they forced their way through masses of rubble; a girder which intercepted them had to be cut through with oxy-acetylene apparatus. Then a wall two feet thick formed an obstruction, and an opening had to be made through it. The student's head and shoulders were now freed, but she was still pinned by the feet. She was given injections, and once more the rescuers laboured on. After fourteen hours of work the girl's body was set free. But still the workers' task was not accomplished. A massive girder beside her prevented them from moving her. So once more they had to renew their efforts, this time on the long and delicate operation of removing the debris immediately above her, so that she could be lifted over the girder.

Here is another typical story, this time with a sadder ending. A group of people had crowded into a public

shelter beneath a school, which was struck by a bomb. The shelter unfortunately collapsed, burying many of those who had sought its protection. All night the rescuers laboured. A man's voice was heard. They tore away at the debris till their hands were stained with blood. They cut through the great girders. At length they freed the trapped man, gave him tea, and removed him from his tomb of fallen masonry. But the hours beneath the wreckage had been more than his strength could bear. He died as soon as they had removed him, and their hours of anxious labour had after all been in vain.

It is not surprising that members of the Boy Scouts should figure among those who have distinguished themselves in rescue work. One of these was Patrol Leader Collins, of Shoreditch. In a house which had been damaged but not demolished it was known that there had been three children in a first-floor bedroom. Were they still there? Nobody knew. The room was piled with rubble and fallen bricks. The staircase had been destroyed, and there was no ladder at hand. Collins came to the rescue. Though Nazi planes were still overhead, he climbed over the crumbling debris to the half-destroyed room, dug through the rubble with his bare hands, and discovered that the children were there in bed, injured but still alive. He managed to extricate them and hand them down to other rescuers below; and for this he was awarded the Scouts' silver cross.

It would not be fitting to close this short chapter without reference to the part played in rescue work by the Royal Engineers, and in particular the Bomb Disposal squads. No work is more dangerous than that of saving life and property from the disastrous effects of the delayed-action bomb. To spend one's days digging out live bombs, indeed, is perhaps the most perfect



example of living dangerously that anyone has yet been able to discover.

There are innumerable instances of brave deeds on the part of these men. In addition to the obvious danger of handling a lethal weapon apt to explode without warning, the difficulties and dangers have often been enhanced by the experimental nature of the work. Knowledge of delayed-action devices is obtained only by practical investigation. The officers in charge of Bomb Disposal sections have many times shown heroism as well as ingenuity in tackling unfamiliar mechanism. One Lieutenant was recently awarded the George Cross for carrying an unusual type of bomb on his shoulder for two hundred yards to a suitable place for investigation, keeping his men under cover the while. Another received an award for his determination in dealing with a difficult bomb from which he could not extract the fuse. He finally tied a piece of string to the fuse mechanism and pulled it from a distance—though a distance not far enough away to prevent him from being blown into the air by the resulting explosion.

The most famous of all bomb disposal actions was the rescue of a London building. But the building was something more than just that: it was a great national symbol—St Paul's Cathedral. The story of such a rescue fully deserves telling.

The bomb which caused the trouble was dropped during a raid on London in September, 1940. It was a huge delayed-action bomb, which fell in the roadway beside the west end of the cathedral, making a large crater. It fell, unfortunately, at an angle, and in the soft clay soil was in danger of sinking nearer and nearer to the foundations of the cathedral before exploding. Had this happened it is impossible to say how great the resulting damage would have been.

The Royal Engineers were soon on the spot. But the

first two or three to investigate the crater were soon out again—more or less unconscious. The bomb had fractured a gas main in the roadway, and the crater was filled with poisonous fumes. However, workers of the gas company quickly arrived, just in time to give artificial respiration to the suffering Engineers. Gas was turned off at the mains, and hoses were played on the fractured pipes in the crater in order to flood them. Fires which were beginning to blaze were put out. These gas workers laboured furiously for over twelve hours, working in shifts, to make it possible for the Engineers to continue their job. All this while the bomb lay beneath their feet, deep in the soil, for all they knew about to blow up at any moment.

The Bomb Disposal unit now took over. To reach the bomb at all, yet alone remove it, was a task of considerable difficulty. It had sunk to a depth of over thirty feet, and the men had to dig and dig in order to get near it. At last they exposed it. And what a bomb it was! It seemed almost like a young whale floundering in the mud: it was eight feet long and weighed over a ton.

To remove it from its pit was no light labour. Special tackle had to be devised to grip it. Two lorries were needed to draw it out. But at length the task was accomplished, and the bomb mounted on one of the lorries. It had now to be taken to a safe place. A special messenger went ahead clearing the way, for had it exploded in a crowded street the casualty list might well have been serious. But fortune in this instance was with the brave. The disposal squad brought the bomb safely to Hackney Marshes, and there it was exploded. It went up with a roar that was heard for miles around, shaking the windows of every house in the district, and bringing down the plaster in a good many.

So ended the history of a monster that came near



to wrecking the mightiest edifice in London. To the disposal men, however, the episode was all in the day's work. When the crater was empty one of them stood looking down into the burrow that the bomb had made for itself, and was heard to remark: "When the war's over I think I shall retire and keep rabbits!"

This brief chapter does not pretend to offer a comprehensive survey of the rescue work of our civil and military organizations. It tells the story of just a few incidents worthy of record. It is a chapter that could be extended almost indefinitely if justice were done to every act of rescue that air attacks have occasioned. Nor could it yet be concluded, for the deeds of which it tells are still living history, and day by day their number is increased.

G. F. L.

## QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

### THE WINNING OF A D.C.M.

1. Describe some of the different types of military aircraft in use to-day.
2. "His machine fell like a falling leaf." Do you think this a good simile?  
Suggest similes for: an aeroplane taking off; a flying-boat landing on the water; a machine bursting into fire in mid-air; a plane very high up flying into the sun; a barrage balloon.
3. Choose one of the above and write a short descriptive paragraph about it.
4. Notice the short sentences used when a dramatic episode (such as Smith's climb to the pilot's cockpit) is being dealt with. Write an account in similar style of a runaway horse, or an escaping car driven by motor bandits.
5. The Lewis gun is named after Colonel Lewis of the U.S. army. Make a list of other inventions (not necessarily connected with war) which have taken their names from the inventors.

### AERIAL COMBAT

1. "Vengeance is sweet: yet I could not help feeling a twinge of sympathy with those two Huns who had met their death in the triumphant hour of victory." Comment on this.
2. You have probably noticed that the author, though he writes vividly and well, tends to overdo the use of dots as a punctuation device. They should be used only where no other punctuation mark is satisfactory. Write the following sentences replacing the dots by other stops:
  - (a) "Nearer they came" to "one British and one Hun."
  - (b) "Above me the fight was drifting" to "as they could stomach."
  - (c) "Again the Nieuport turned to the attack" to "make a false manœuvre."
3. Write a short report on the narrator, recommending him for an award.



4. "I found that most of them had taken cover in the wayside ditch!" Do you agree with the narrator that this was "good evidence of bad morale"? Give reasons.
5. Write a letter from the rescued Nieuport pilot to a friend, telling the story of his experience.
6. Suppose the extract were to be used as an episode in a film. Say which incidents you would present if you were directing the film, with a note on how you would deal with them. (You may note that the hero subsequently recovers and is awarded the V.C.)

### SHOT DOWN INTO THE SEA

1. Write an account of this episode in 150 words.
2. "Crack-crack" is an example of the figure of speech known as onomatopœia. Give some other examples of this figure.
3. "There is nearly always a humorous side, even to some tragic events." Do you agree? Give illustrations.
4. Use as many as you can of the following words in a paragraph entitled, "The Dangers (or Pleasures) of Flying": stimulating, confirmatory, indicator, discarded, fulcrum, disconcerting.
5. Write on "The Use of Pigeons in War" or "The Value of Animals to Man."

### LUFTWAFFE OVER BRITAIN

1. What is the meaning of *Luftwaffe*? Give a list of other German words which have been adopted into our vocabulary recently. Which of them do you think are a valuable addition to our language?
2. Draw a sketch map of the area over which the Battle of Britain was mainly fought.
3. Imagine you are a Rip Van Winkle who fell asleep in a south coast town in September, 1890, and awoke exactly fifty years later. Tell the story of what you saw.
4. Write sentences which illustrate the meaning of the following words: jettison; laconic; dissipate; intercept; formation. If you prefer to do so, fit the words into a single paragraph. You can use them in any order.
5. A running commentary of an aerial dog-fight was broadcast by the B.B.C. during the Battle of Britain. Many listeners strongly objected. Write a letter to a newspaper either condemning or defending such a broadcast.

## SIR RICHARD GRENVILLE

1. Compare this episode with that of H.M.S. *Hardy* at Narvik. What points (a) of similarity, (b) of difference, do you notice?
2. "The master gunner readily condescended (to sink the ship) but the captain and master were of another opinion." Write a short defence of whichever opinion you agree with, taking care to emphasize your chief points.
3. Rewrite the second paragraph in clear modern English.
4. Imagine a modern destroyer caught in a similar position to that of the *Revenge*. Write an account of the fight.
5. What impression of the Spaniards do you receive from this extract?
6. Write a newspaper report of the fight, with headlines and sub-headings.

## A LIFE-BOAT TO THE RESCUE

1. Notice the simplicity of the style of this extract. What do you think is the most vivid phrase or sentence depicting the violence of the seas?
2. Charles Fish, the coxswain, won the Royal National Life-boat Institution Gold Medal twice and the Silver Medal once. What can we gather about his character from this extract?
3. Notice the spelling of the words "buoy" and "boy." Find other pairs of words which are pronounced alike but spelt differently. Make a list of ten such pairs and use them in sentences of your own.
4. Write a summary of the *City of Bradford's* rescue in 150 words.
5. Imagine yourself in the place of one of the shipwrecked men. Tell the story of your experiences. (The mate of the *Indian Chief* told his story to Mr Clark Russell, and it appeared together with Charles Fish's in the *Daily Telegraph*. It has also been reprinted in the book *Britain's Life-boats*, by A. J. Dawson.)
6. Write an essay on one of the following:
  - (a) The Royal National Life-boat Institution.
  - (b) The Value of Life-boats.
  - (c) Heroes of the Sea.

## STANDING BY

1. Make a list of men mentioned in this extract who deserve credit for their gallantry.
2. Give your impression of Captain Fried.



3. Write a dialogue between the passenger with an appointment in London and an officer of the ship.
4. Imagine you are a member of the *Antinoe's* crew. You are keeping a diary. Write an extract for it after the first batch of men had left the *Antinoe* in Miller's boat. You yourself are one of those left behind.
5. Find out the meaning of "ballistics." Write two or three sentences explaining in what ways a knowledge of ballistics can be applied in peace or war.
6. What different attempts were made by the *Roosevelt* to rescue the *Antinoe*?

### THE FIGHT OF THE *EXETER*

1. Write an account of the episode as it must have seemed to an officer on the German ship. (Note that Captain Langsdorff was probably acting under previous instructions in seeking to avoid conflict with British warships. He was reputed to be a gentlemanly sailor, who treated his prisoners humanely—there were a number on board the *Admiral Graf Spee*.)
2. Pick out two paragraphs in which the writer uses the device of repetition for the sake of emphasis.
3. Make a list of names of men who deserve commendation for their valour, with a brief note on the action of each.
4. Comment on the following:
  - (a) "They left the *Exeter* behind them to the north licking her wounds."
  - (b) "Like monstrous pock-marks on the cross-ripple of the bow waves."
  - (c) "Their movements magnified, made monstrous by the power of the machine."
5. Write an essay on "Rumour in War Time," or "Warships of To-day."
6. Find out what you can about Coronel and write a paragraph on it.

### THE STORY OF THE *ALTMARK*

1. Do you think that the British acted rightly in entering neutral waters to rescue the prisoners? What arguments would you use to convince someone who held the opposite view?
2. Imagine yourself in a prison ship. You have bribed one of the guards to post a letter for you (from a neutral port) describing your experiences. Write the letter.

3. Suppose you had been responsible for writing the message that was enclosed in the tin. What would you have written? (You are allowed only 50 words, and your message must be as useful and informative as possible.)
4. What efforts were made by the Germans to prevent the Norwegians from discovering the presence of the prisoners?
5. "Some of the crew were decent enough fellows." Give an example of this.

### THE BATTLE OF NARVIK

1. The German force at Narvik was intended to seize the port and railway and cut off the Allies' supplies of iron ore. Captain Warburton-Lee's action against a superior naval force was taken in order to prevent the Germans from consolidating their position at Narvik, as they would probably have succeeded in doing had the British waited to launch a more elaborately prepared attack. How far do you think Warburton-Lee's decision was justified?
2. It has been said that Captain Warburton-Lee's initiative, supported by the gallantry of his shipmates, raised high the prestige of British seamanship. Comment on this view.
3. Draw a diagram to illustrate the course of the battle.
4. Imagine you are Mrs Christiansen or one of the other Norwegian villagers, and describe the arrival of the *Hardy's* survivors.

### THE RESCUE OF TOM FAGGUS

1. Describe the scene of the battle-field.
2. What effect did the sight of it have on John Ridd?
3. What impression of John's character do you receive from the extract?
4. Discuss "The Intelligence and Bravery of Animals," using details from this extract to illustrate your remarks.
5. Do you think John was right in placing Tom on Winnie? Write a short imaginary dialogue between John and his sister Annie (Tom's wife) in which he defends his course of action.
6. What do you gather from the extract of Tom Faggus's feelings for his horse?



SAVED FROM A BLAZING MILL

1. Study the first paragraph carefully, noting the deliberate anti-climax in the last sentence. Write a paragraph on the situation and appearance of a building in your own district.
2. Write a report of the rescue, beginning: "A thrilling rescue was seen by a large crowd yesterday, when a mill in Dunham Street caught fire."
3. Rewrite in Reported Speech the paragraph beginning: "They've gotten it fixed. . . ." Compare the two versions from the point of view of vividness.
4. What difference do you notice in the attitude of the crowd when Jem Wilson first crosses the ladder and after he has finally reached safety? How do you account for this difference?
5. What do you think is the most thrilling moment of the rescue?
6. Use the following words in sentences of your own: aperture, imminent, imprecation, diapason, perceptibly, insensible.

RESCUED FROM A WHALE'S HEAD

1. Describe in 50 words the process of obtaining oil from the whale's head. (You are advised to keep your sentences short.)
2. Explain the following: "Turkish Muezzin," "the twin reciprocating bucket," "like Niagara's Table Rock into the whirlpool," "had wrought a somerset."
3. Tell the story of another incident from *Moby Dick* or any other whaling story.
4. Write a summary of this episode in about 200 words.
5. "Thus . . . the deliverance . . . was successfully accomplished, in the teeth, too, of the most untoward and hopeless impediments; which is a lesson by no means to be forgotten." Discuss this.

THE MOOSE RIVER RESCUE

1. What efforts were made by the three explorers to avoid being trapped?
2. What were the advantages and disadvantages of lighting a fire in the "tunnel prison"?
3. What were the disadvantages of making the rescue tunnel only three feet in diameter? Why did the rescuers not make a larger tunnel?
4. Give instances (a) of Dr Robertson's tact, (b) of his courage.

## 236 VALIANT DEEDS IN LIFE AND LITERATURE

5. Write reports for the STOP PRESS column of an evening newspaper: (a) for Tuesday, April 21; (b) for Wednesday, April 22. You are allowed 40 words for each report.
6. Write an essay on one of the following: (a) Mines and Miners; (b) Gold; (c) Dangerous Occupations.

### THE RESCUE OF AN ARMY

1. What simile is used to describe the invading German army? Write sentences about the following, introducing suitable similes: Mr Churchill, a tank, the Cameron Highlanders, Dunkirk beach, a parachutist.
2. Consult a map of the French coast. How far is Calais from Dunkirk? Draw a sketch map of the district, filling in the names of all places mentioned in this extract.
3. What phrase does Mr Churchill use to indicate bad news? Give two phrases of your own with a similar meaning to the phrase above.
4. What evidence can you offer to show that there was no lack of voluntary helpers to man the rescue boats?
5. Give the approximate proportion of British naval vessels which succeeded in accomplishing their task without being sunk.
6. Write a story in which you help to take a small motor-boat across the Channel to Dunkirk to assist in the evacuation.

### FROM FORTRESS TO FREEDOM

1. Make a list of the articles used by O'Brien in preparing for and carrying out the escape.
2. What differences do you notice in the difficulties which confront the escaper of this period compared with those which confronted an escaper such as Captain Hardy in the Great War?
3. Draw a plan of the fortress as you imagine it might have appeared.
4. Find the meaning of the following: surveillance; glacis; lean-to roof; astern; napoleon.
5. "Everything is possible to a brave man." Discuss this.
6. Suppose O'Brien, instead of Peter Simple, were the narrator. Write his account of the night of the escape.

### A VALIANT EFFORT

1. Draw a diagram showing the arrangement of the building from which Hardy escaped.
2. Give a list of the difficulties which he had to face.
3. In what ways did luck come to Hardy's assistance?



4. Write a short paragraph on Captain Hardy's character as it is revealed in this extract.
5. From the extract choose words which have the same meaning as the following: able to be reached; very small indeed; obvious; unable to be expressed; on the surface, professedly.
6. (a) Tell the story of Hardy's escape in 300 words.  
(b) Continue the story as you think it might have happened.

### PASSING THE POST

1. From the information supplied draw a rough sketch map illustrating Cartwright's journey from the wood to safety.
2. Why was his action in the lane foolish? What excuse for it does he offer? What else could he have done?
3. Mention three ways in which Cartwright was lucky.
4. Write the note (as you imagine it) which Cartwright sent to the Commandant at Aachen.
5. "I leant on the barrier and told the Hun my then unbiased opinion of him and his Fatherland." Comment on this, saying whether you think this action was justified or not.
6. Write a short essay on one of the following:
  - (a) Freedom.
  - (b) National Prejudices.
  - (c) Stinging Nettles.

### THE ESCAPE OF THE TUNNELLERS

1. What did the orderlies imply by "women and children first"? Give three reasons which hindered orderlies from taking part in the escape.
2. Explain: "head-for-head repatriation," "cutting-out man," "like the Tuscans in the famous lay," "a long confabulation," "a hopeless impasse."
3. How did the Senior British officer propose to escape? Give your opinion of his chances.
4. Which participators in the escape deserve censure for their behaviour?
5. Imagine you are the German Commandant. Write a report of the incident to the Kriegsministerium (War Office), remembering to represent things in a light as favourable to yourself as possible.
6. Ten of the escapers ultimately succeeded in making their way out of Germany. Imagine you are one of the ten. Write a letter to a friend telling how you got out of the camp.

### INTO THE ENEMY'S LINES

1. Do O'Malley and his companions complete the mission on which they have set out? If not, is their journey wasted? Give a reason.
2. "Supposing that Mike's French savoured of Strasbourg." Explain this.
3. Give the meaning of *la consigne, en avant*.
4. Which of the following statements are true?
  - (a) The Spanish attack to be directed against San Benito was not intended to induce the British general to hold his position.
  - (b) O'Malley was at first afraid to plunge into the stream.
  - (c) Mike had no knowledge of French.
  - (d) The storm continued throughout the expedition.
  - (e) O'Malley and his companions did not succeed in out-flanking the enemy's lines.
5. Imagine you are the Frenchman who was captured. Write an account of your experience in 300 words.
6. Write a story in which a modern soldier makes a journey into the enemy's trenches.

### A FIGHT WITH THE SEA

1. Give a description of any strange dream you have had.
2. Dickens, you have no doubt noticed, is inclined to use commas more freely than is customary to-day. Quote a few examples of this. What other stop does he frequently use?
3. Comment on the following (without necessarily condemning):
  - (a) "The excited voice went clamouring along the staircase."
  - (b) "Bore one another down, and rolled in, in interminable hosts."
  - (c) "As she sprung wildly over."
  - (d) "The life of the solitary man upon the mast hung by a thread. Still he clung to it."
  - (e) "Some eddying fragments I saw in the sea, as if a mere cask had been broken, in running to the spot where they were hauling in."
  - (f) "While every means of restoration were tried."
4. Which of the details given by Dickens to suggest the fearfulness of the scene seems to you the most effective? Give a reason.



# ADVENTURE IN THE ANTARCTIC

1. The three explorers were exhausted after they had crossed the ridge. Why didn't they pitch a camp there and then? Why did Evans go ahead on his own? How did he find his way back?
2. Discuss the reasons which Evans offers to explain his falling ill on the journey.
3. Which task do you think was the harder: Crean's journey to Hut Point, or Lashly's stay with Evans? Give your reasons.
4. Evans pays tribute to the bravery of Lashly and Crean, but says little of his own. What particular examples of his own bravery can you suggest?
5. "We had exhausted practically every topic of conversation. . . ." Suggest some possible topics, omitting of course those given in the extract.
6. Write an essay on (a) Arctic Exploration, or (b) The Hero I Most Admire.

## THE LAST SOLO

1. Find the meaning of *estaminet*. Make a list of other foreign words used in this extract, and give their meanings.
2. Do you think Angus was justified in bravely sacrificing his life in order to put the German machine-gun post out of action?
3. Write the letter that you imagine Angus would have written to his father.
4. Give the meaning of the following: quiescence; nocturnal; paladin; intermittent; fantasia.
5. Describe the working of any of the following: Lewis gun; Bren gun; Mills grenade; Tommy gun.
6. "In the South African show (the Boer War) I can honestly say I was perfectly happy. We were fighting in open country against an adversary who was a gentleman; and although there was plenty of risk, the chances were that one came through all right. . . . Modern scientific developments have turned a sporting chance of being scuppered into a mathematical certainty." Assume that the above remarks (made by Major Wagstaffe in *Carrying On*) are the opening words of a discussion on "The Influence of Science on Modern Warfare." Write notes on your contribution to the discussion.

## MEETING DEATH BRAVELY

1. (a) "Harold talks like an old woman all day in the house."  
 (b) "Harold good pal was a marvel in helping me."  
 Compare these two statements. What important truth about human nature can be drawn from the comparison?
2. In spite of the troubles which Christian had to face, are there any traces of humour to be found?
3. A letter to his mother, found with the diary, contains the words: "Please don't blame dear Jack." What does this reveal concerning both Christian himself and Hornby?
4. Expand the following so as to bring out their full meaning:  
 (a) "Whether to stay or not?"  
 (b) "If I cannot get grub to-morrow must make preparations."  
 (c) "Ptarmigan came near to house once but could not get."
5. Christian had only just left Dover College when he made his fatal journey of exploration. Write an obituary notice suitable for his school magazine.
6. Quote from his diary to illustrate (a) Christian's optimism, (b) his courage.

## HEROES OF THE AIR RAIDS

1. Give an account of any air raid experience of your own.
2. Tell the story of any other raid rescue that you have heard or read about.
3. Point out the value of the part played by (a) the fire services, (b) air raid wardens, in the work of civil defence.
4. Which of the heroes and heroines whose stories are told here do you most admire?
5. Write an essay on "Living Dangerously."



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